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SEAN O'HAGAN POP'S DALAI LLAMA

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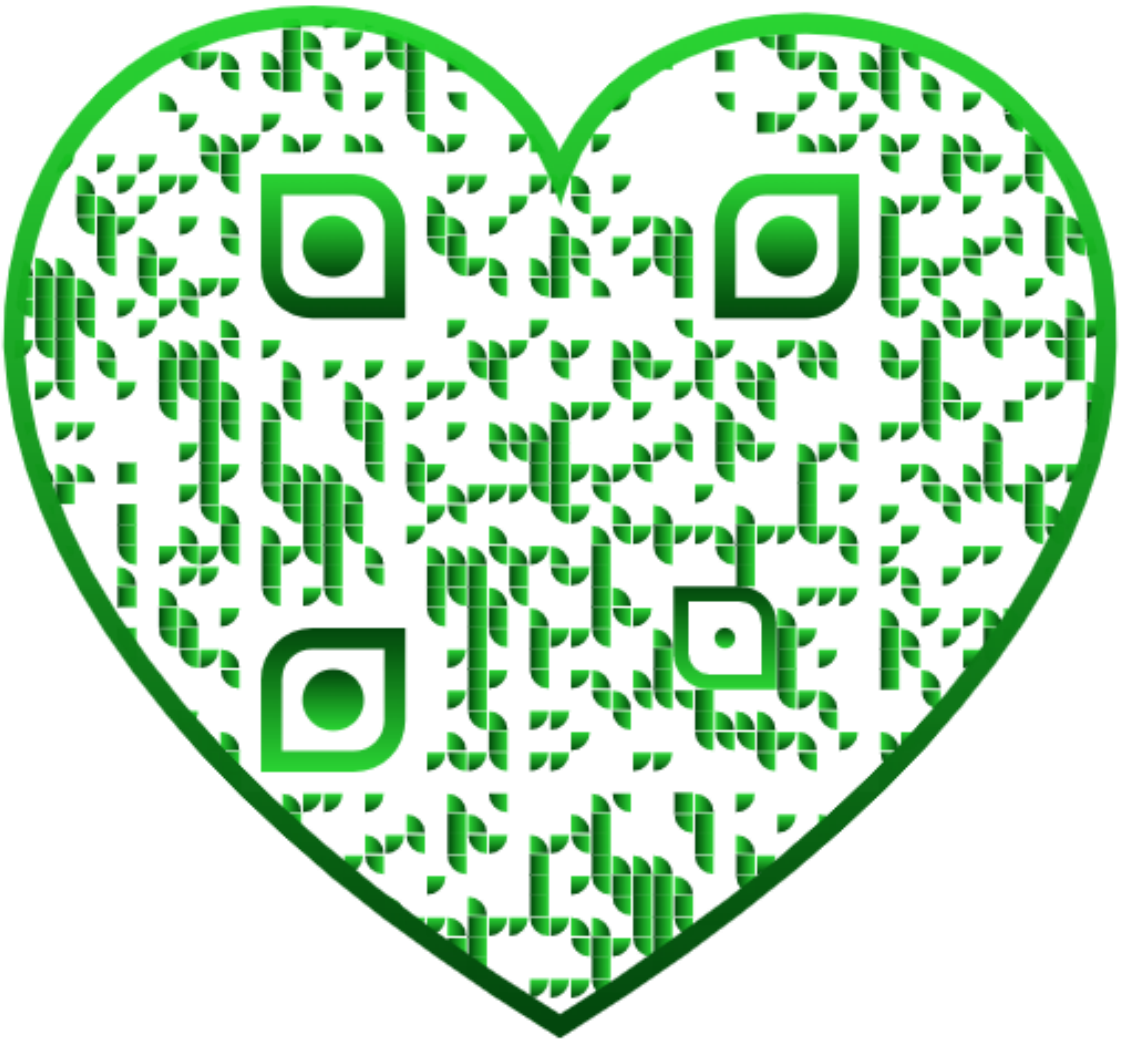

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"The reason I can't make contemporary pop music is that I don't listen to it"

PHOTO: SEBASTIAN BUZZALINO

SHINDIG!

welcome

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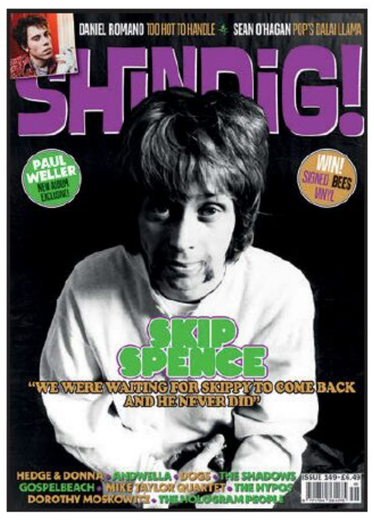

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Hey Shindiggers,

I was only saying to my co-ed Andy and our publisher Tom earlier, how *Shindig!* has become a real "music monthly". It was brought up due to the wide range of artists and genres our readers now reference (see mention of Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine on page six). Whilst we, and our older writers, undoubtedly came from garage and psych, much of our audience hasn't. Perhaps you are one of these people, and we welcome you with open arms.

I don't think we've changed *per se*, as we still write a lot about what we came in with, but the mag has opened up immeasurably, covering modern bands that few others write about, like the incredible Daniel Romano. Plenty of room is also always given over to cult legends, such as The Eyes, and Andwella, which are the exact type of bands we'd have featured in our earliest days. For us, it's all about the best from now and then. We like to think of ourselves as a knowledgeable local record shop, one that knows its shit, but welcomes all. So please, do spread the word, get your music loving colleagues, friends and family to subscribe and join the party. At this period in history we need a bloody good escape. These pages offer that. Take part in the conversation on our vibrant socials.

Inside this issue, the legendary Alexander 'Skip' Spence, top chap Paul Weller, French powerpop punkers Dogs, king of arrangements Sean O'Hagan, and a whole lot more.

See ya next month for a huge celebration around our 150th edition.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy,
Jon 'Mojo' Mills
Editor-In-Chief

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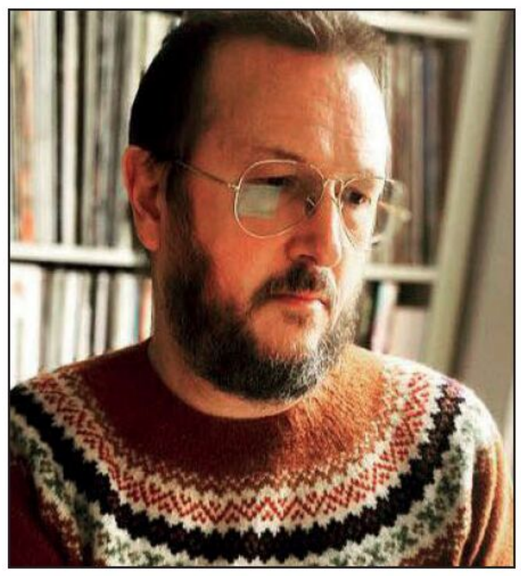

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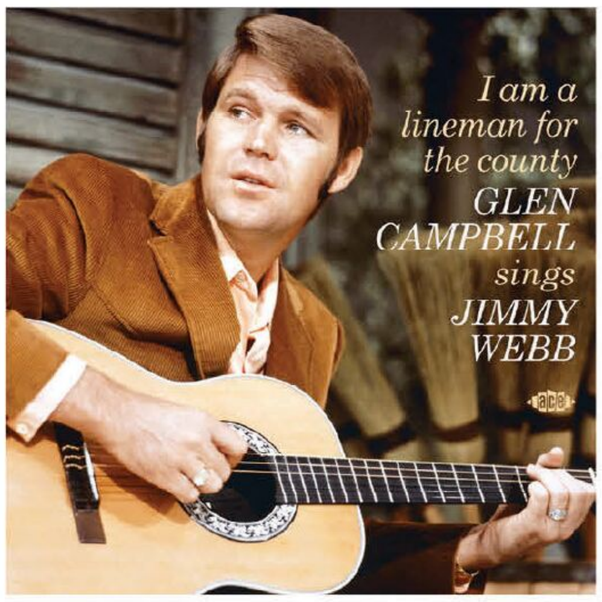
SUBSCRIBERS' PRIZE DRAW

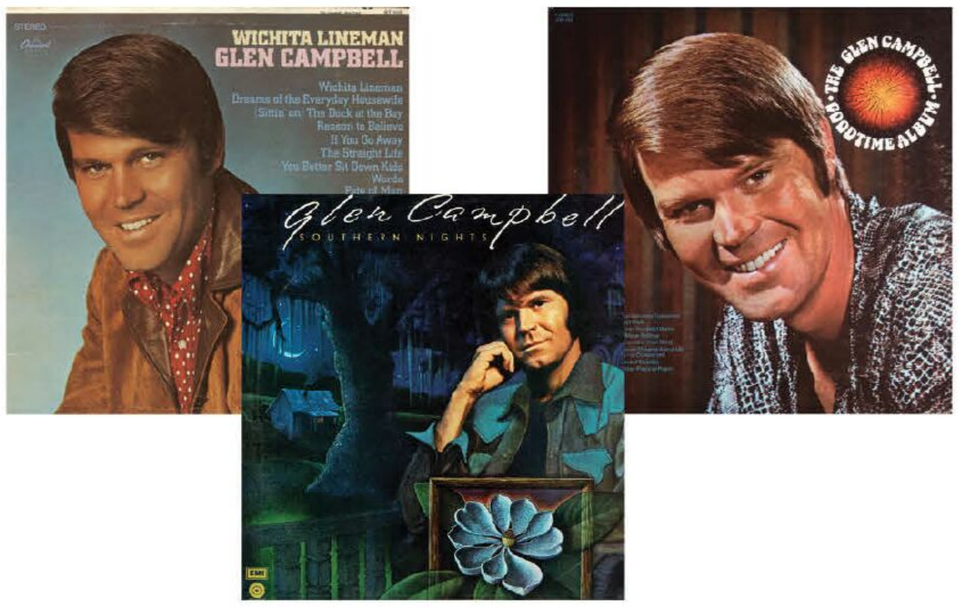
Signed colour vinyl of The Bees' debut and a second dub-mix reimagining

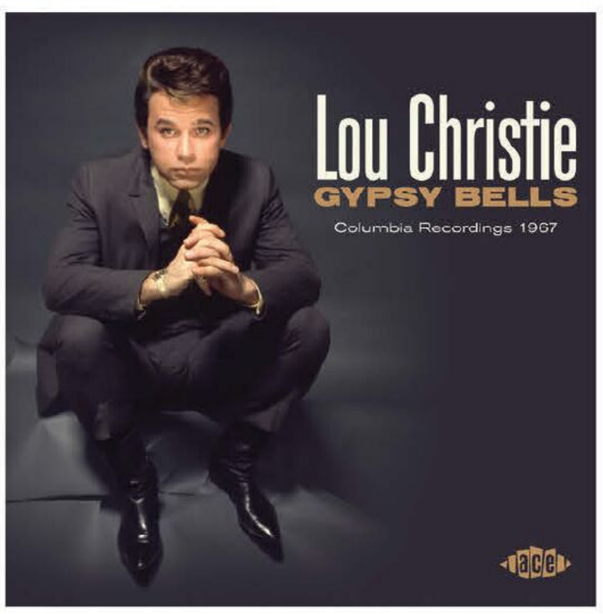
Garage fan? An anthology of all the recordings our own Jon 'Mojo' Mills made with The Nuthins in the '90s is out now on Detour. Head to bit.ly/46QhB2M to order, adding "from *Shindig!*"

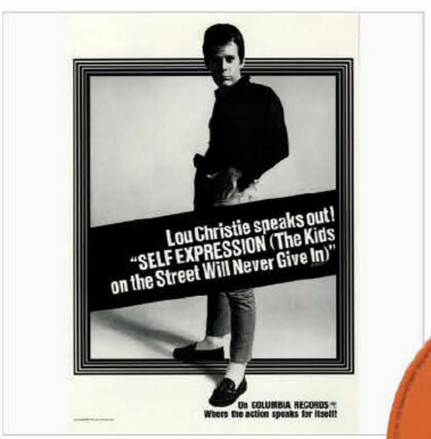
New releases: March 2024



Glen Campbell
Glen Campbell Sings Jimmy Webb
CDTOP 1641
The matching of Glen Campbell's voice to Jimmy Webb's songs created some of the most evocative, widescreen American music ever made. This collection explores the duo's work beyond their classic trilogy – 'By The Time I Get To Phoenix', 'Wichita Lineman', 'Galveston' – and includes every Webb/ Campbell recording from 1967 to the turn of the 80s.







Lou Christie
Gypsy Bells: Columbia Recordings 1967
CDTOP 1601
At long last, a CD full of the falsetto pop king's wonderful Columbia recordings – including all the singles and 15 previously unreleased masters.

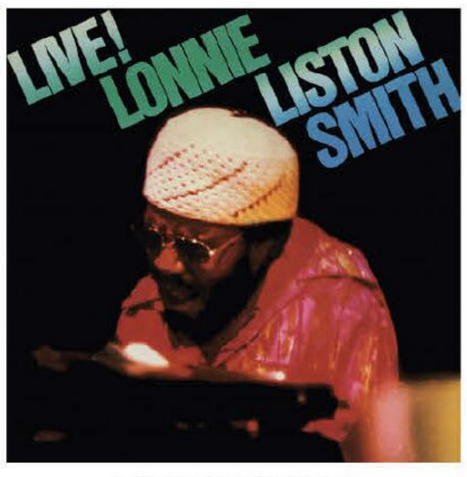
Joyce Harris
I Got My Mojo Working (Trailer Version) C/W No Way Out
NW 518 7"
Harris' cover version of 'I Got My Mojo Working' – backed by Sonny Rhodes' group the Daylighters remained unissued until 1997. With renewed interest in Harris we are delighted to pair this 'Trailer' version of the track with 'No Way Out' as a 7" single.

Towana & The Total Destruction / Ty Karim /
Wear Your Natural, Baby C/W If I Can't Stop You (I Can Slow You Down)
REPRO 17 7"
'Wear Your Natural, Baby' was a good seller when issued on Kent Harris' Romark label in the late 60s – judging by the, at least, three pressings of it. The flip has become a modern soul classic over time.

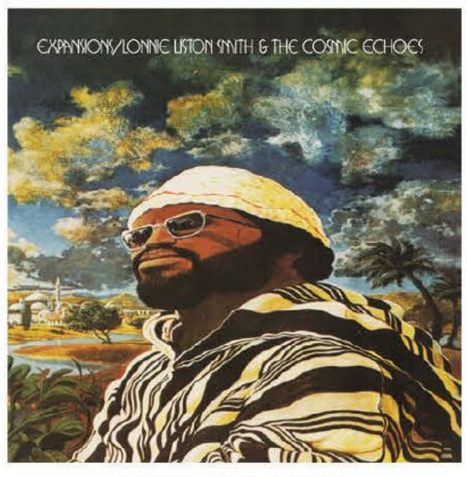
Carolyn Crawford / Get Up And Move C/W Sugar Boy
CITY 094 7"
This Kent single has been eagerly awaited for some time. Plays at the 100 Club and other venues of ill-repute, has made it a must-play, dancefloor-filling track. The flip 'Sugar Boy' is more typical of Carolyn and Mickey's time at Motown with a bouncy beat and appropriately cute lyrics. Both sides debut here.

Little Ann / Who Are You Trying To Fool C/W The Smile On Your Face
REPRO 15 7"
Little Ann's 'Who Are You Trying To Fool' was unknown until the late 90s when Ace acquired Dave Hamilton's tapes and this glorious soul dancer was discovered. For its flip we have gone for the beautiful, midtempo 'The Smile On Your Face'.

Melvin Davis / Wedding Bells C/W It's No News
RFPRO 18 7"
Melvin Davis' 'Wedding Bells' 45 was an early Dave Hamilton collaboration - first issued on the Ke Ke label out of Detroit in 1964. Known as Detroit's soul ambassador, this release is our tribute to him.

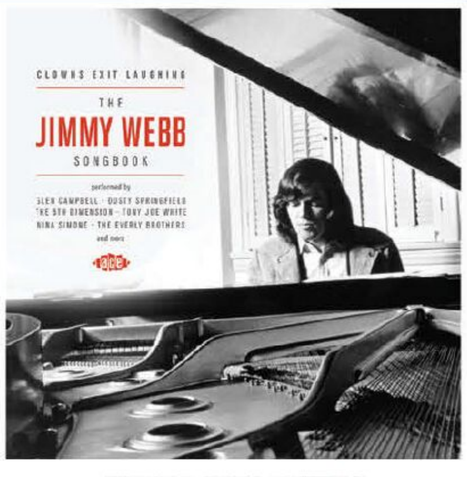


Lonnie Liston Smith
Live!
HIQLP 100 LP
'Lonnie Liston Smith's only live album, recorded at the height of his success in 1977. Featuring his brother Donald, and the core of the Cosmic Echoes, it is one of the classic live jazz-funk albums with a fast and furious take on 'Expansions'



Lonnie Liston Smith
Expansions
HIQLP 067/ CDBGPM 263/ Digital
Lonnie Liston's classic 1975 jazz funk masterpiece, is one of the finest jazz funk albums of the 1970s. Here mastered from original first generation tapes and sounding better than ever.

FROM THE VAULTS:



Clowns Exit Laughing
The Jimmy Webb Songbook
CDTOP 1620
Prime examples of the art and craft of one of the 20th century's greatest songwriters.

thoughts&words

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STAR LETTER

More than just music: The Eyes

THE EYES HAVE IT

Dear Jon,

Many of my friends and fellow record collectors don't give The Eyes enough credit. I wonder if people will disagree with me, but the band was more than just music. That band was art – their gigs, the covers of their releases, the way they dressed and presented themselves in interviews or fan meetings. That was something different, even for a flamboyant era. I wonder how they would have sounded if the band had continued into the '70s and '80s. What could they have accomplished? For me, they would be as influential as David Bowie. But we will never know...

I have been recently listening a lot to another band that I consider art, a contemporary one, Polish/Japanese quartet AcidSitter. Their debut album *Make Acid Great Again* is just phenomenal. They kind of remind me of The Eyes. Maybe this band will have more luck and fully develop their potential!

Anyway, thank you for giving a space for acts old and new in your magazine. Keep on writing about niche and ambitious artists.

Kind regards,

Ewelina Lason

A brilliant letter Ewelina, and so true. Psychedelia, glam, art-rock, punk and the subsequent mod revivals owe so much to The Eyes. We're sending you The Purple Hearts' Extraordinary Sensations Studio & Live 1979-1986 *3-CD box as a thank you. They clearly took note. As you can see from the following boxed letters, the article made a huge impact on our readers.*

A WHOLE LOTTA EYES

Dear Jon,

It is fantastic to see the story of The Eyes. Their ongoing influence and admiration, particularly in West London, seemed lost in time.

You are probably aware that 'When the Night Falls' was included in Keith Richards' BBC take-over a few years back. That was a strong indication to us that people really cared about this band. No doubt about it, they had a great sound which was ahead of its time.

Really cool to see they played The Ealing Club.

Many thanks,

Alistair Young
ealingclub.com
62films.com

Dear Jon,

Thank you so much for the cover and main feature on The Eyes who, in my view, was well overdue but also very welcome.

After previous excellent features on some of my favourite bands, such as The Action, The Creation, The Master's Apprentices etc, it was amazing to finally see The Eyes getting the recognition that they're due (you don't get this in other music monthlies).

Those Bam Caruso releases in the mid-80s (along with The Pupils release on Wing) were a formative part of my youth, so to get the full story of their career and interview comments from Terry Nolder was amazing. Their influence has largely gone under the radar, apart from those of us "in the know", but has clearly been apparent within many bands over the decades. Like so many greats of their time, The Eyes burnt brightly but quickly; despite that, here we are almost 60-years later celebrating their brief but wonderful career and still playing their records. "The Eyes Have It" indeed.

Keep up the great work. As a subscriber, I am always delighted to have my copy of *Shindig!* several days before it appears on the newsstands.

Kindest regards,

Paul Hooper-Keeley

Hi Jon,

Another cracking issue, eye-opening and eclectic as always! Being a mod, I enjoyed the 60 Years Of Mod and The Eyes features, but the Spirit piece was enlightening. More records to buy. I'll need to build an extension at this rate!

Cheers,

Lee Roberts,

Hi Jon,

That was a great piece on The Eyes, I've got the *Arrival* mini-LP and Stones EP. However, I was surprised to read that in 1965 *The Mirror* was using the term "freak beat". I always assumed that this term was created by Phil Smee and Bam Caruso in the early '80s.

Mike Fornatale's review of the Majic Ship LP (*Shindig!* #146) is "interesting" as it says the Neil Young song 'Down By The River' is disposable. To these ears it's sublime, as it goes into 'For What It's Worth', a brilliant song. However, am I biased? I class the latter song as one of my Desert Island Discs.

Keep up the brilliant work,

Gareth Kitching

Hi Jon,

Nice article about The Eyes, in which I was amused to see that guitarist Larry Wallis was mentioned as "Terry" Wallis. The late Larry Wallis had quite a career. He was, at one time, in the band UFO, replacing original guitarist Mick Bolton, and adding more "guitar dymanics" than his predecessor, although, according to UFO bassist (the late) Pete Way, he was generally "not popular" within their ranks... after that, he was with The Pink Fairies for a short time. I did see him with the PF, in Nov, 1972, and also in the line-up was guitarist Mick Wayne (previously of Junior's Eyes), which apparently was a very rare and short-lived version of the band. After his time in the PF, he joined the embryonic Motörhead, who, early in their career supported Blue Oyster Cult at Hammersmith Odeon (summer '75) and were apparently booed off!

Wallis went on to play with the legendary Mick Farren in various bands, and unfortunately died a few years ago. There is a classic clip of him playing with UFO on Youtube that's well worth a look.

See ya later,

Bob Sawyer

Thanks to everyone who wrote in about They Eyes

Who needs *Friends*? Bring on The Grays.

WE'LL BE THERE FOR YOU

Fellows heads and travellers at *Shindig!*,

Thanks for featuring The Grays.

Don't you think that if there was a God, he'd have let The Grays write the theme tune to *Friends* and Jason Falkner, Jon Brion and co would have been afforded the type of fame and remuneration they deserved, and we, the pop culture consuming public of the analogue mid-90s, wouldn't have had to sit through that fuck awful version of a powerpop song (that Rembrandts track) whilst our mum/boyfriend/sister/housemate/whoever had said program on in the background? A rhetorical question. One for the ages, I'm sure you'll agree.

Rich Hanscomb

Ha ha. So true, and so sad that The Grays didn't become the biggest band of their era.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Hi Jon!

I am very happy to have found sanctuary in the pages of *Shindig!*. As a serial magazine reader, watching titles dwindle one by one, I think the discipline of word limit and deadline bring out the best in journalism. I suppose this is much the same as the way a limited physical music collection enables choice, whilst unlimited streaming offers option fatigue and doom-scrolling.

You invite responses to Lee Roberts' letter about deluxe reissues in issue #148 and I am compelled to respond.

Firstly, in principle I agree. I do not need another version of "insert classic album". My taste is broad, I am compelled to buy Trashcan Sinatras' and Blue Aeroplanes' reissues, and I just bought *1992 A Love Album* by Carter USM for the fourth time recently. Insanity defined. My home music server thinks I have lost the plot. "How many times do you need these songs?," it asks me as I attempt to rip the album again, remastered, but remastered more recently than the last remaster.

Secondly, it's interesting...right? Honestly, I bought the Carter reissues for the DVD, but I bought the Jethro Tull CD reissues for the demos and the live tracks. I have some Frank Zappa songs so many times I could carpet my house with them. And King Crimson? That guy has sold me every song he has released almost every time it has been performed! What is the matter with me?

Thirdly, I play in a band, and so I have a fascination with the development of a song, the way it grows, builds and changes over the years. You can chart the history of every song our band has written through practise room recordings – the false starts, the blind alleys and the krautrock intros... so I am always fascinated to see if other bands have the same process.

Fourthly, they've got you by the balls. Produce a series of reissues in a neat, multi-CD book form and I am defenceless. I might fight the urge for a while, but ultimately, I will be defeated by completism.

So, Lee? I agree.

But I counter, it's not the act, it's the price.

I love hearing these tracks, but I object when the price is ridiculous. I don't want posters, re-created artwork or tickets. Actually, posters with creases? Don't get me started.

But that is how capitalism works.

Kind regards,

John Parsons

Hi Jon,

I read last month's "Star Letter" with an interest and no little puzzlement. I get that Lee, the writer, has no interest in the proliferation of reissues at the moment but seems rather selfish that he doesn't want anyone else to have them. It's called supply and demand. A lot of time and effort and no little investment goes into the research, remastering, remixing and repackaging of these items that shows that there is an appetite among the buying public for them.

I have a method. I don't like rap, hip-hop, chamber music, Mongolian throat singing, Gregorian chants or Sam Fender, therefore I spend no money on them but am happy for other people to do so, a system that Lee should perhaps adopt regarding box sets etc.

Cheers,

Geoff Laidlaw

Thanks John and Geoff. Lee started something there. My tuppence, if you don't care for the ephemera and want to cut down on space, the majority of the big boxes are available to stream and buy on Qobuz in hi-res, and sound immense via a decent Cambridge Audio streamer. Just a thought.

CHARLATANS

Hi Jon,

I have to say, doesn't David Arnoff look like Mike Wilhelm!

Best regards,

Brian Davies

Totally. It's the Edwardian garb. Well spotted.

SHINDIG!

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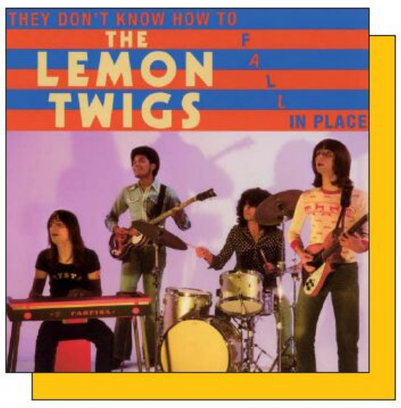
shindiggin'

What's HOT on the Shindig! turntable

The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month

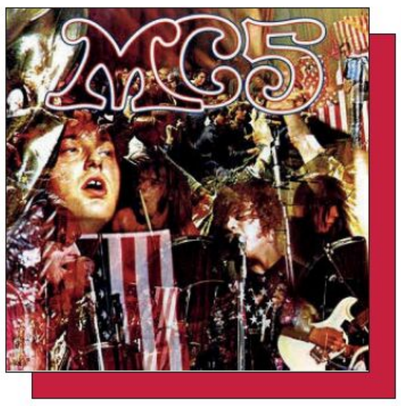


THE LEMON TWIGS

They Don't Know How To Fall In Place

On Instagram some wag humorously commented, "It's like their goal is to be the most *Shindig!* band there ever was," and he has a point. We thought 'My Golden Years' was as good as it can get, and then we heard this and watched the brilliantly executed video. Catch it now. 'They Don't Know How To Fall In Place' marks the announcement of May's forthcoming album and fully embodies the young Twigs' "Mersey Beach" phase. Baroque keys worthy of The Left Banke, cascading '60s harmonies and a perfect amalgam of period-perfect pop, performance and production fill this song.

Available on: streaming platforms

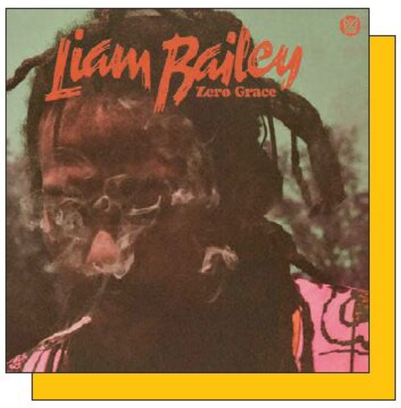


MC5

Rocket Reducer No 62 (Rama Lama Fa Fa Fa)

How better to remember Brother Wayne Kramer than on one of the purest lightning bolts of transformative energy from the mother of all napalm bursts that is *Kick Out The Jams.* Soaked in Brother Wayne and Fred 'Sonic' Smith's frenetic arpeggiated guitar runs and anchored around one of the most primal riffs in the MC5's mighty armoury, this is the self-styled "most dangerous band in the world" at take-off velocity. Viciously lacerating in its frontal attack, the wired power rush of the Motor City's finest live on stage at Detroit's Grande Ballroom still incinerates everything within hearing range.

Available on: Kick Out The Jams (ELEKTRA LP)



LIAM BAILEY

Mercy Tree

In fairness, any track from Bailey's latest album could have made this month's list, but in pole position is its most political song. It's an articulate call to right the wrongs of colonisation, both geographical and cultural, while making the point that reparations would be something that ultimately helps free and uplift us all. "Everybody wants to be like we, but the money never coming through," sings Bailey. If the lyrics don't move you, then the music should, with Bailey leaning into the '70s reggae of his Jamaican heritage. Vintage production, irresistible beats, and that all-important heavy, heavy bass.

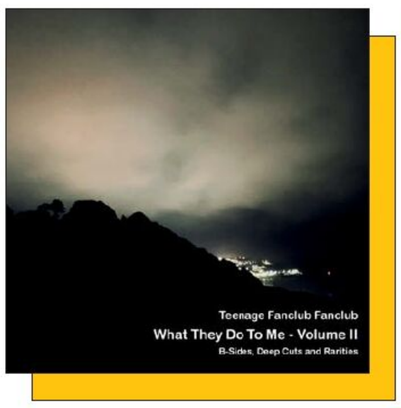
Available on: Zero Grace (BIG CROWN LP)

THE ASTEROID NO 4

Hollyhock Way

Get psychedelicised with San Francisco's interplanetary explorers as they weave a 21st century tapestry of sonic delights around myriad influences including Spacemen 3 and Brian Jonestown Massacre. A snappy drum track skips along until glistening guitars shimmer into the room astride a nu-gazey arrangement with Britpop overtones. Toss in a phased head-swirling vibration (think 'How Soon Is Now') and a dreamy vocal and you'll be floating in a hazy, lazy cloud of effervescent sunshine.

Available on: Tremble (SILVER ARROW EP)



LORNA

Every Step Is A Way Through

Teenage Fanclub, at the last count, have four tribute albums in their name. Five if you count Ben Gibbard's straight remake of *Bandwagonesque.* TFC songs lend themselves well to decent cover versions and it's refreshing to hear a female vocal, as heard on this warm, enveloping reading of the 1995 'Neil Jung' CD bonus track, lifted from a second deep dive into the Fannies' huge catalogue of B-sides, cover versions and oddities. These albums are a real labour of love and can be downloaded for free but please donate to the charity the project supports.

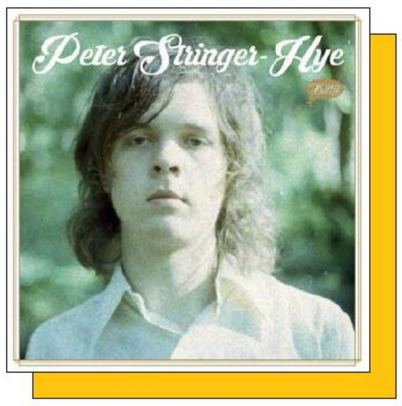
Available on: What They Do To Me Volume II (WINNETKA DIGITAL)

NIKKI & THE CORVETTES

I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend

Combining the bubblegum punk of the Ramones with the girl group snottiness of The Shangri-La's, Dominique Lorenz (aka Nikki) and her bubblegum-poppin', garage rockin' Corvettes stomped their way through an album of sickly-sweet paeans to teenage lust that nobody bought in 1980 but has since become one of the flagship entries in the powerpop scene. This infectious earworm is a none-too-subtle confession of eternal love that would've sold millions if Debbie Harry sang it and is just one of a dozen toe-tapping charmers that'll melt your heart in under half an hour. Get the picture? Yes, we see.

Available on: Nikki And The Corvettes (MUNSTER LP)

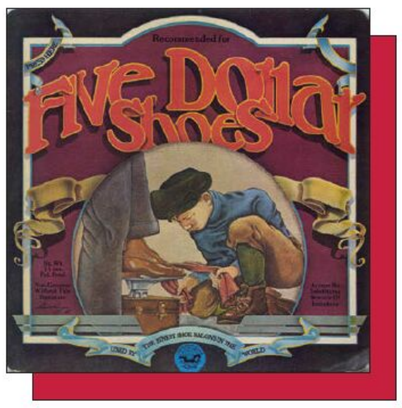


PETER STRINGER-HYE

When My Eyes Are Closed

It's been five years since Paperhead/Promised Land Sound member Stringer-Hye's last solo outing *Pan*, and nine since the eminently playable and sonically alluring *Sunday Girls* EP. This track may be its highlight, a louche, languorous gem that occupies a sweet spot somewhere between the Elephant 6 roster's slacker melodicism and the classic mid-60s guitar-pop of countless two-bit US folk-rock acts. And you can still pick up a copy for two quid! Appearances on records by Sean Thompson's Weird Ears and Morgan have followed, but we can't help but wonder if we'll hear Peter's own work again.

Available on: Sunday Girls (TROUBLE IN MIND EP)

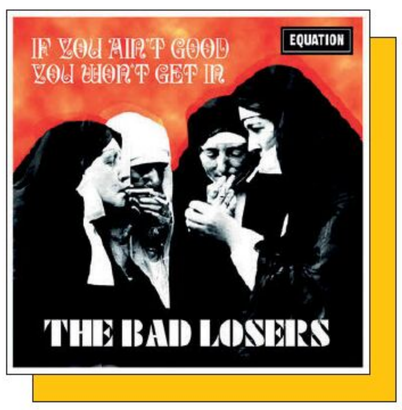


FIVE DOLLAR SHOES

Love Song

How derivative is this? It's basically a shouty David Johansen fronting post-Bowie Mott The Hoople, with the keyboard part practically lifted wholesale from 'All The Way To Memphis'. Except this pre-dates *All The Young Dudes* by a month and the Dolls' eponymous debut by a full year. This lost glam classic incongruously appeared on Melanie's Neighbourhood Records at a time when the singer-songwriter could do no wrong, yet came and went without notice. Criminally, the parent album has long been out of print and has never received a CD release. Glitterfreaks are advised to head to YouTube now.

Available on: Five Dollar Shoes (NEIGHBOURHOOD LP)



BAD LOSERS

Rome Wasn't Built In A Day

One of the stand-out cuts from Bristol group The Bad Losers' second LP *If You Ain't Good You Won't Get In*, issued a few months after the recent tragic passing of songwriter, vocalist and harmonica man John McLean (RIP). Driving, philosophical and lyrical, 'Rome Wasn't Built In A Day' recalls those great late '70s punk and new-wave acts whose singles, although seldom seen in the charts, were nevertheless usually solid and dependable. There are plenty such delights to savour across the album.

Available on: If You Ain't Good You Won't Get In (EQUATION LP)

THE DEVILS

The X-Sorcist

Rewind to 1974 and the previous 12 months have seen William Friedkin's supernatural masterpiece *The Exorcist* cause shockwaves around the world. Enter then James Brown bandleader and master arranger David Matthews to seize on the fervent hysteria around the movie, assemble a studio band and cut this heavy slice of funk-sploitation complete with Linda Blair-aping opening, frog noises and wild guitar and synth splashes. Proof that the devil not only has the best tunes, but also parties harder.

Available on: PEOPLE 45

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Subscribers' PRIZE DRAW

Keen readers may recall our fabulous feature on **THE BEES** in issue #142, now available as a bespoke issue to buy, whilst print subscribers can access digitally via our archive. The Bees are back on the road this month after a lengthy hiatus and, to celebrate, the lads have signed copies of their reissued 2022 debut ***Sunshine Hit Me*** and the four-track RSD release. One lucky subscriber will win this sweet as honey haul.

*All print subscribers are automatically entered

Garage fan? An anthology of all the recordings our own Jon 'Mojo' Mills made with **The Nuthins** in the '90s is out now on Detour. Head to **bit.ly/46QhB2M** to order, adding "from Shindig!"

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it's a **happening** thing

A stylish Mr Weller , "looking forward"
PHOTO: SANDRA V

Now Is Here

PAUL WELLER reflects on life at 66 and a forthcoming album of that very name.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS gleefully poses a few questions

It seems quite apt that, as he turns 66, Paul Weller's 17th solo studio album should be called *66* rather than 17. That it was the year England won The World Cup, The Beatles released *Revolver*, The Who *A Quick One*, The Small Faces their debut, and countless formative 45s were made by the likes of The Creation and The Action, is further proof of its significance. The number will register with anyone who fell in love with Weller as a teenage mod looking back to the '60s. Yet *66* isn't a record that aims to revive the past or be nostalgic. "The older you get is probably the best time to experiment and collaborate with different people," says Paul on the phone from Japan, where the band have just finished touring and are awaiting a flight to Australia. "It's so easy to do the same things. We have routines, and musically it's easy to get into what you're used to doing when it comes to writing a song and making a record. It's always good to open it up and let other things in, other people too, and other influences. You have to keep open-minded and to keep looking forward, seeing where else you can go within music."

A number of these collaborative songs go back a number of years. "Whenever I have a few tunes, we record them," explains Paul of the process in his hospitable Black Barn studio. "'What am I gonna do with all these tracks?' I recently thought. At one time, we had more than enough for a double album. It could have been sprawling and eclectic. But I just couldn't make it work. It didn't flow, so I trimmed it down to the 12 that we now have. Originally there were 20 or so songs to choose from." One such track is the excellent Byrds-ish 'Now Is Here', which Paul sent to us a month or so back via text, the day after he recorded it. "That's going to be on a 10-inch vinyl with another four tracks, which will come out after *66*. We just couldn't make it fit into the mood of the album."

And indeed, the songs Paul has chosen for *66* work as an album, even though there's no overriding theme. "'Burn Out', which I wrote with Erland Cooper, was probably the first thing we recorded. They used it on a TV program as well, called *Without Sin*, starring my mate Johnny Harris and Vicky McClure. That had been hanging around for ages. I couldn't really think what to do with it then, but I think it's a fitting end to this album."

"There's always a bit of progress going on, even at our late stages in life. That's all I'm looking for really"

There are further co-writes with a coterie of friends. "Bobby Gillespie did the words for 'Soul Wandering' and Noel Gallagher wrote 'Jumble Queen'." These are the album's two rockiest moments, with the latter having something of a glammy-edge and 'Soul Wandering' recalling the incisive early '70s guitar breaks heard during Paul's early solo recordings. "My personal favourite, 'Nothing', is a sort of soul ballad. The lyric came from a poem that a friend of Suggs wrote. I managed to turn that into a tune. 'Ship Of Fools' is another song that I wrote with Suggs. Quite a few of the people who contribute have played together at some point over the last 30, 40 years. Dr Robert sent me 'Rise Up Singing', which was going to be for his Monk's Road Social Club project. I thought the song was so good, but it just fell through the cracks. It didn't really do anything. I don't even know if people knew it was out or not. So, I added our own stuff to the version I did with Robert. It's definitely got that '80s soul feel of The Blow Monkeys and Style Council. I just think we can all play and sing that style better now, that's all." Weller in 2024 is definitely a man that can look both back and forward. Take the consensus on The Style Council. "We, like everyone else in the '80s, were victims of technology and production. Absolutely. When you hear the songs in a more organic fashion there were some really good tunes."

With a nod to the bossa and jazz of some of the Council's work, Paul's old friend and early solo years collaborator, actor Max Beesley also lays down some vibes on 'Sleepy Hollow', and Jacko Peake is all over the album, adding bass and flute. Le SuperHomard's Christophe Valiant also contributes. ""A Glimpse Of You' and 'My Best Friend's Coat' are two of my favourite songs on the album. Christophe is a brilliant multi-instrumentalist and arranger." While the type of cosmic disco that's all the rage in 2024 also fittingly appears, tailor made for Weller. Rising female vocal trio Say She She add soaring harmonies to 'In Full Flight'. "They were such great people," he adds.

A major star of *66*, along with the varied talented contributors, has to be Black Barn. "Yeah, absolutely man. And Charles Rees is a big, big part of it all, as indeed are all the team. In my opinion, he's someone's who's just got better at what he does. I feel that we're all improving as musicians and as a team. There's always a bit of progress going on, even at our late stages in life. That's all I'm looking for really."

As a monumental album needs a monumental sleeve, it's wonderful that Paul has got to work with the one and only Peter Blake again. The last time was for *Stanley Road* 29 years ago. "I wanted something in his style," Paul says of the great pop artist. "It's not a collage, it's more like one of his fairground/circus pieces. It's a simple design, but you can see it's Peter. I was lucky that he had a bit of time to do it. He's just an incredible fellow."

And finally, ahead of the new album, what in the hell does it feel like to have had the 183-episode podcast *Desperately Seeking Paul* made about you? "It's pretty bonkers, isn't it? But Dan's really nice. He hasn't got any sides to him. He's very well informed and a good journalist. I thought he was great, and it was rather fitting that I was on the last show."

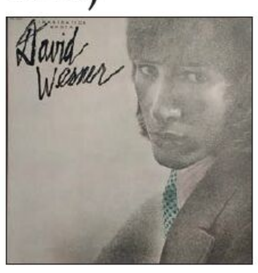
66 is out in May on Parlophone

it's a **happening** thing

Pointing The Finger

BRENT RADEMAKER guides us through 10 eclectic tracks that have inspired the final **GOSPELBEACH** album, from new-wave and post-punk to jangle and country

DAVID WERNER
Cold Shivers
(From *Imagination Quota*, RCA Victor, 1975)



David Werner is the great white whale to the endless succession of reissue labels sailing the seas of cash, clamouring for a repress and digitisation of his stellar '70s LPs *Whizz Kid*, *Imagination Quota*, and self-titled *David Werner*. I fell hard for those obscure but brilliant records and was lucky to strike up an old-fashioned phone call friendship with my hero himself. I went so far as to ask him the meaning behind the lyrics to 'Cold Shivers' (a heavenly pop masterpiece). It was during these phone calls that I made the decision to scrap the entire album and start from scratch.

"The studio is a thief." David's words sent "cold shivers down my spine".

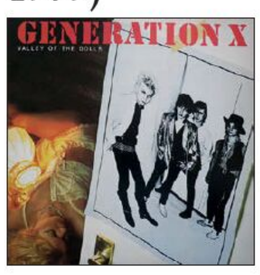
THE CHURCH
Myrrh
(From *Heyday*, EMI, 1985)

Few '80s groups jangled and ebowed like The Church, an ever-present soundtrack to my life. Singing bassist Steve Kilby gave me permission to drop my embarrassing rhythm guitar slinging lead singer persona from past GospelbeacH tours and actually pump out eighth notes on my bass on 'Nothin' But Fool'.

JOSEPHINE NETWORK
Judge Judy
(From *No One's Rose*, After The Fall, 2023)

When a predominantly "powerpop" artist casually makes the best country-pop album of 2023 it stopped me in my tracks. 'Judge Judy' hits hard at cancel culture lyrically while the music travels the dusty road of late '60s country-fried rock taken by all those Byrds/Burritos followers. It reminded me why I love country music… out came 'I'll Close My Eyes' and 'York Blvd'.

GENERATION X
The Prime Of Kenny Silvers Parts One And Two
(From *Valley Of The Dolls*, Chrysalis, 1979)



When I discovered that my punk-rock guitar hero Derwood Andrews from Generation X / Empire lived a few hours away in Joshua Tree I set out on a mission to make contact. *Valley Of The Dolls* with its more expressive songs, like this one, painted pictures and told stories… the plaintive wails of punk frustration of their debut LP gave way into stories of coming of age on the tough West London backstreets. Derwood even lent lap steel to our album as we casually lifted the idea of a song in "Parts One & Two".

THE CURE
Out Of This World
(From *Blood Flowers*, Fiction, 2000)

Probably the last great Cure song. One of the few "overdubs" on *Wiggle Your Fingers* was my Fender VI (six string bass) through my Boss chorus pedal. Keyboardist Roger O'Donnell is a friend, and during the recording I caught the final Los Angeles show at the Hollywood Bowl. His calamity filled piano riffs on this post-punk throwback reminded me of my partner and producer Jon Niemann's approach to add uplifting piano parts to depressing lyrics and melancholy music. At first they sound out of place but then you realise they are just out of this world. Everything ends.

Brent Rademaker: Fingers at the ready, ears open

LINDA RONDSTADT
Mad Love
(From *Mad Love*, Asylum, 1979)

Jonny has a big poster of The Cretones up in the lounge of his studio. It's the only one I've ever seen. For years I seemed to be the only one going around singing the praises of Linda's new-wave/powerpop album *Mad Love*. I love its mixture of song and studio craftsmanship so much that we even cherry picked the bassist Bob Glaub. In a similar fashion, Linda cherry-picked the guitarist and songs from The Cretones for her album.

LET'S ACTIVE
Every Word Means No
(From *Afoot*, IRS, 1983)

As far as Byrds influenced groups go, Let's Active don't get mentioned a lot. I was hip to their jangle in the '80s. During a late-night record spinning session at

Chris Robinson's Laurel Canyon home, he played this one and shared tales of being penpals with drummer Sara. Along with The Go-Go's, The Bangles and The Mo-Dettes This element of Love inspired '60s oddness made its way onto *Wiggle Your Fingers*. Let's Active toured with my beloved Bunnymen in the '80s, a coveted slot. Mitch Easter is God.

THE TEARDROP EXPLODES
Ha Ha I'm Drowning
(From *Kilimanjaro*, Mercury, 1980)

My dad was a world class organist, and my partner/producer Jon Niemann is as well. I grew up knowing the difference between a Hammond B3 and a Farfisa, I saw the transition of the synthesiser to home/portable keyboard. David Balfes' keys on the Teardrops' records and this psyche love masterpiece always connected with me. The role the keyboards play on our new album take over from the heavy lead guitar of our last. Jon had a digital Farfisa built for this album and it's drowning in cool keyboard sounds.

KACEY MUSGRAVES
Lonely Weekend
(From *Golden Hour*, MCA Nashville, 2018)

I love real life/confessional lyrics. Lou Barlow, Alex Chilton, Ray Davies, Joni and Kacey Musgraves. I also love songs with predominantly two chords (maybe a third for fun) like this happy/sad beauty, 'Lonely Weekend'. Melancholia that ultimately gives way to joy is a neat trick and only obtained by being real. It takes a toll though which is why this is our final album.

MOZART ESTATE
Four White Men In A Black Car
(From *Pop-Up! Ker-Ching! And The Possibilities Of Modern Shopping*, West Midland, 2023)

I've bought a record by Lawrence every decade since 1980. It was a thrill to hear my friend, Joe Harvey-Whyte's pedal steel on this track. His band The Hanging Stars are also GospelbeacH faves. We recruited Freeman DeJongh, a cool new Curation artist, to play pedal steel to get that mixture of Nashville pedal steel with post-punk synthesisers. It's infectious.

"Melancholia that ultimately gives way to joy is a neat trick and only obtained by being real. It takes a toll though which is why this is our final album"

Wiggle Your Fingers is out on 26th April on Curation

Greg Cartwright (centre) and Scott McMickern (right), taking it easy with The Hypos

Our Kind Of Party

Ex-Reigning Sound man Greg Cartwright is back with new band THE HYPOS, formed with Scott McMicken of Dr Dog. THOMAS PATTERSON gets hyped

Formerly of garage-rock titans The Oblivians and Reigning Sound, Greg Cartwright is a *Shindig!* fave, so we were excited when a new Cartwright project landed in January this year with very little fanfare. Called The Hypos, the band is a collaboration with Scott McMicken of psychedelic popsters Dr Dog, mixing Scott's catchy hooks with Greg's rootsy approach to make an album that comes on like Paul Simon getting down with the Memphis Mafia at a joint off Bourbon Street.

"Scott and his partner Leann moved to Asheville about two years ago and we were hanging out, talking about music," Greg says of the band's genesis. "I was just wrapping up Reigning Sound and Dr Dog was taking a hiatus. It was good timing. We had crossed paths a few times over the years and we were already friends. Scott has a little garden shed near his house, that's where we made the album. It's mostly live takes with live vocals and a ton of bleed but it works."

The band is rounded out with Kevin Williams on bass, Evan Martin on drums and Krista Wroten on violin, whilst "honorary Hypo" Jared Samuel added remote overdubs, including horns and strings. Additional magic was then added by Matt Ross-Spang, best known as producer, mixer and/or engineer for the likes of Margo Price, Jason Isbell and Drive By-Truckers. "We mixed the album in Memphis at his studio Southern Grooves. He was the chief engineer at Sun Studio and Sam Phillips' studio before opening his own place and he's just a kindred spirit. I love that guy!"

Indeed, whilst the album may have been recorded in Asheville, North Carolina, the spirit of Memphis courses through the album. "Right around the time Scott and Leann moved to Asheville, Esther and I bought a house in Memphis. We were ready to spend more time back there. I bought Marshall Grant's house. He was the stand-up bass player for Johnny Cash & The Tennessee Two. Marshall's den is the place where the band started so it's an amazing place to call home."

Currently the album is digital-only, but a physical copy should be coming later this year. American fans will also be able to pick up a 45 of 'All Summer' / 'Heartbroke Town' when the band tour the South in March and then the East Coast in October. In the meantime, both Greg and Scott are keeping busy (together and apart) with a second Hypos' album, a new Dr Dog LP and a slew of other projects, such as bands The Ever Expanding, Laundry Bats and Pull Chains.

"I've also done some co-writing with The Black Keys on their new album, due out this spring, as well as some other Easy Eye projects. All these collaborations and cowriting ventures, I really owe a lot of that to Dan Auerbach. His encouragement really opened me up to the possibility of collaboration in a new way. I feel like a kid again."

The Hypos is available at thehypos.bandcamp.com

"Dan Auerbach's encouragement really opened me up to the possibility of collaboration in a new way. I feel like a kid again"

What A Wonderful World

THE HOLOGRAM PEOPLE invite **PAUL OSBORNE** into their beautifully conceived world of weird, wonderful and groovy soundtracks

"It's never been our aim to be successful or start a band in the traditional sense," states Jonathan Parkes, (one half of The Hologram People along with Dominic Keen) when discussing the tried and tested music industry treadmill: record, rehearse, gig. "We're having way too much fun just making the sort of LPs we'd like to find hiding on dusty record shelves. If you get to read any of The Hologram People sleeve notes, you'll discover we actually exist in a hermetically sealed parallel universe alongside all the oddball '60s and '70s culture that we revere."

Indeed, The Hologram People's records come complete with their own perfectly conceived story, inspired by cult movies and soundtracks, with particular nods to the masters of Italian giallo, folk-horror and weirder corners of the library music spectrum. It was 2022's *Village Of The Snake God* that grabbed the attention of many – now *Isola Dei Morti Viventi* looks set to cement the band's reputation as a cut above the usual glut of faux soundtrack recordings, in no small part due to the diversity of their music and the propensity to lean towards the weird and wonderful. Jonathan cites the likes of Lalo Schifrin, Fabio Frizzi, Riz Ortolani, Ennio Morricone and the fabled Radiophonic Workshop.

"With both albums the concepts were all worked out first," explains Dominic of the creative process. "We drafted a basic storyline and even had most of the song titles decided on before writing any music." The pair handle most of the instrumental duties themselves. "Our skills complement each other as Jon is behind all the drums and percussion and I'm responsible for the mixing," continues Dominic, "otherwise we enjoy crossing over on all synth/guitar/bass/whatever duties. We also have some very talented collaborators on this album, such as Ivan Bursov (saxophone), Alice Russell and Siobhan Lynch (vocals) and Eliza Dunhill (trumpet and flugelhorn)."

They take their creative process very seriously; *Isola Dei Morti Viventi* underwent several re-records until they were happy with the finished result. "We've found this to be the only true test to know if a project is complete. It's also the reason our albums usually land just under the 40-minute mark. Everything has to pass through our stringent quality control department. This is traditionally located in the lounge, starting around about 9pm most evenings."

So, what next for the duo? "Expanding our various projects and ideas in collaboration with a film-maker would possibly be a desirable direction to move into," says Dominic. "Or just wait until the technology catches up with our budget then send a horde of hologram zombies out on a world tour."

"We actually exist in a hermetically sealed parallel universe alongside all the oddball '60s and '70s culture that we revere"

Isola Dei Morti Viventi is out now on Dreamlord Recordings

These men are real. The Hologram People

Rise Again

LA psych-rock quartet **LEVITATION ROOM** continue their sonic journey on new album *Strange Weather*. **DUNCAN FLETCHER** talks highs and lows with singer and guitarist **JULIAN PORTE**

Third albums are typically either a joy to make or frustratingly tortuous. *Shindig!* wonders how the creative process was with *Strange Weather*. "As far as time goes it was torturous!" says Julian. "It took three different recording sessions with three different producers before we got the sound we wanted. Technically, the first one didn't count since we were just going into our friend Rob Campanella's studio (ex-Brian Jonestown Massacre) to record demos." The COVID pandemic put that on hiatus. Further recordings in 2021 with keyboardist Glenn Brigman producing were also shelved. Eventually the band hooked up with producer Jason Kick. "Once we got in the studio with him in spring 2022 it was all a breeze. The songs had passed through much time and took on new life and revision. I'm glad we took our time."

Shindig! can confirm the album is a hazily psychedelic listen, specked with touches of soul, Latin-rock and afrobeat. "Glad you picked up on that!" says Julian. "We wanted to expand a little on our love for soul, funk, and world music for this record. Curtis Mayfield and Gil Scott-Heron were big inspirations for some songs (for me anyway). Definitely some Jorge Ben and Caetano Veloso influence there as well."

One could easily assume the album's title track is about climate change. "This has been a common misconception so I hope we can clear the air here," counters Julian, "*Strange Weather* is more of a metaphor for the strange times we're going through; politically, socially, and individually. It's about weathering the storm and going through hard times, because eventually, the storm will pass, and the sun will shine again."

Joining Julian in the band line-up are fellow founding members Gabriel Fernandez (lead guitar) and Johnathan Martin (percussion), together with new bassist Kevin Perez. "I met Kevin through my girlfriend Benny… One night he invited us to a gig he had, filling in on bass for a band in Long Beach. The dude pretty much stole the show, so I asked him if he'd be interested in joining Levitation Room." The album also features instrumental contributions from Rob Campanella (BJM) and Joel Robinow (Black Crowes), plus backup vocals from Jensine Benitez (ex-Thee Sacred Souls). "An amazing vocalist. Anyone reading this interview should check out her solo stuff on Penrose" advises Julian.

At time of writing the band are preparing for a west coast US tour with co-headliners Boogarins before heading to Austin Psych Fest. "We're putting together a really great visual effects show to go with the music" says Julian. "It should be an exciting new experience!"

Strange Weather is out on now on Greenway

Further steps: Levitation Room

Dream Scene

Can German psychedelic trio **TRAUM** take us over the line?

Helen Lichter wants to expand our consciousness beyond the confines of a troubled world. The guitarist, singer and songwriter with Cologne-based trio Traum ("Dream" in English) muses on the power of music and the mind to take us deeper within as well as further outside ourselves. "We have the feeling that especially in these modern times a new, true, psychedelic approach to things might shape our lives for the better."

Accompanying Lichter on this mission are drummer Christoph Guschlbauer and bassist Thereyoughost. Together they have recorded debut single 'Hold The Line' for bespoke US 45s-only label Hypnotic Bridge, a rousing three-minute anthem drenched in reverb. The band adhered to the use of vintage instruments and production techniques to recreate the feel of the '60s pioneers to whom they owe their inspiration. Reference points include The Pretty Things, The Smoke and Tintern Abbey.

Lichter reflects further on the world vision that informs Traum's lyrics. "We wouldn't necessarily advocate spiking the global water supply, but a general renaissance of going beyond just getting stoned to actually expanding our collective mind and integrating some sustainable post-materialistic, post-greed, enlightened ideas of living into each and everyone's daily grind would definitely be welcomed."

That starts with more music. Traum are currently in the middle of recording their debut album, which should see release later this year. Lichter promises that it will not only expand on the sound of 'Hold The Line', but also present listeners with "a bunch of nice, analogue-sounding lysergic surprises". The band is also rehearsing for its first live shows this spring. Those concerts will be in their native Germany though there are hopes for a larger tour before too long. As Lichter exclaims, "We'd love to bring a little Traum to everyone's hometown!" Here's hoping this particular Dream soon becomes reality.

As told to Clive Webb

Scan Me To Listen

CARGO COLLECTIVE

CARGO RECORDS

THE BEVIS FROND
FOCUS ON NATURE
FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

75 minutes of glorious melodies that span 60s psych, English folk, Seattle art-punks The Wipers, the buzzsaw pop of Dinosaur Jr & Hendrix-esque explorations. "Still mixing pop, punk & psych to giddy effect." The Guardian

TELEVISION PERSONALITIES
SOME KIND OF HAPPENING
(SINGLES 1978-1989)
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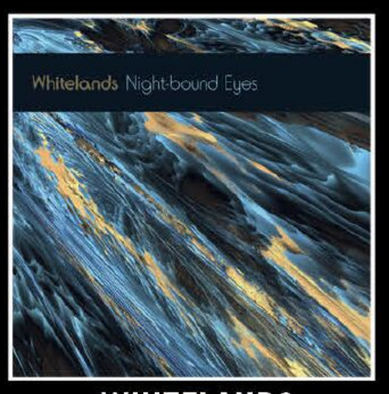
A comprehensive remastered 2 part collection of all their ground-breaking single releases - includes the Peel-approved '14th Floor', 'Salvador Dali's Garden Party' EP & super rare Creation flexi tracks as The Gifted Children.

SHOOTING DAGGERS
LOVE & RAGE
NEW HEAVY SOUNDS LP / CD

Defiant, feminist hardcore punk. Catchy, kick ass shards of pent up fury and melody, infused with 90's shoegaze and grunge. Meet your new favourite band.



WHITELANDS
NIGHT-BOUND EYES ARE BLIND TO THE DAY
SONIC CATHEDRAL LP / CD

The eagerly awaited debut album from the Black British shoegaze band released in the middle of their UK tour supporting Slowdive. Includes the singles 'Setting Sun' and 'Tell Me About It'.

ASTREL K
THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT
TOUGH LOVE LP / CD

The Foreign Department is the 2nd album by Astrel K, the solo project helmed by Stockholm-based British ex-pat & Ulrika Spacek frontman, Rhys Edwards, as cathartic, elliptical work that he has unconsciously been working towards his entire creative life.

DEZ DARE
A MILLION GOATS. A MILLION SPARKS. FIN
GOD UNKNOWN RECORDS LP / CD

Fuzz beast Dez Dare is back with his 4th album and most cohesive yet, belting out fuzz riff driven stompers and 8bit nonsense for the aspiring existentialist.

YOVA
DREAMCATCHERS
QUARTERTONE RECORDINGS LP / CD

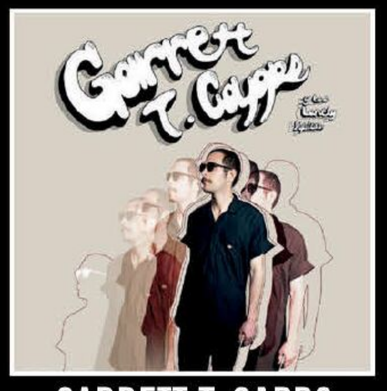
'Beguiling Sonic Adventurers' (MOJO). YOVA duo Jova Radevska & Mark Vernon's 2nd album features contributions from Terry Edwards (Nick Cave), James Sedwards (Thurston Moore), Rob Ellis (PJ Harvey) & Daniel O'Sullivan (Grumbling Fur).

MIDAS FALL
COLD WAVES DIVIDE US
MONOTREME RECORDS LP / CD

'Cold Waves Divide Us' sees award-winning Midas Fall at their most confidently visceral, each song moving beautifully between quiet & loud, interspersing atmospheric strings & 80s synths with heavier layered elements.

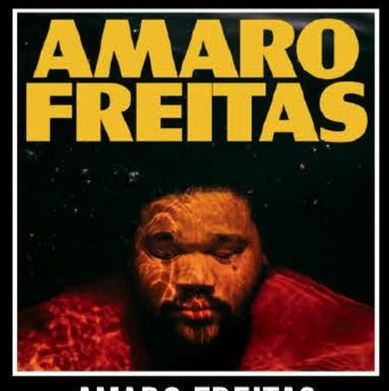
GRACE PETRIE
BUILD SOMETHING BETTER
GRACE PETRIE & ROBOT NEEDS HOME LP / CD

"The musical voice of her generation" - Grace Petrie returns with a new Frank Turner produced record that is full of her powerful socially urgent lyrics and unconstrainable rage.



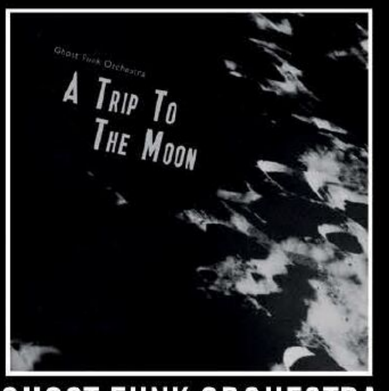
GARRETT T. CAPPS
Y LOS LONELY HIPSTERS
COWPIE RECORDS LP

With Songs like "Born in San Antone," Capps & The Only Hipsters hope to serve up a solid portion of South Texas timbre, complete with heavy steel guitar, accordion, violin, acoustic & electric guitars, organ, bass & drums in various arrangements.



AMARO FREITAS
Y'Y
PSYCHIC HOTLINE LP / CD

Amaro Freitas intwines ancestral knowledge into his "decolonized" interpretation of jazz that shatters preconceived notions of the genre. Ft. Hamid Drake, Shabaka Hutchings, Jeff Parker, Aniel Someillan, and Brandee Younger.



GHOST FUNK ORCHESTRA
A TRIP TO THE MOON
KARMA CHIEF RECORDS LP / CD

'A Trip To The Moon' sees Ghost Funk Orchestra diving deeper in the worlds of film music, exotica, and psychedelic surf rock, all tied together by real recorded transmissions from the Apollo moon missions.

BACAO RHYTHM & STEEL BAND
BRSB
BIG CROWN LP / CD

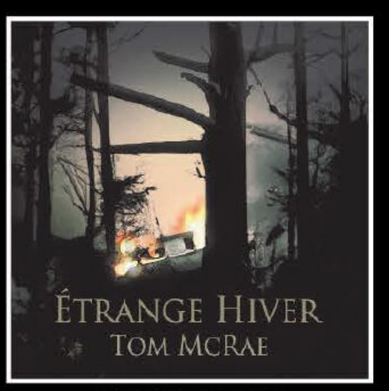
The mysterious steel pan outfit from Hamburg, Germany are back with their 4th full length "BRSB". A rock solid offering of covers from the likes of Snoop Dogg & Dr Dre, Claudja Barry, Drake, & the Stranger Things theme song mixed with killer original compositions.

CREDIT ELECTRIC
SIX
ROYAL OAKIE CD

"weaves a tapestry of lush sounds and melancholic moods, all processed through a cosmic desert country style." Various Small Flames // "…mulls loss & loneliness, rolling them around in the brain…" Raven Sings the Blues.

PREGOBLIN
PREGOBLIN II
STRAP ORIGINALS LP

"PREGOBLIN II's genre-straddling dexterity and melodic riches mark it out as a loser classic fit to rank alongside Beck and Daniel Johnston… forward-facing and inspired" ★★★★ MOJO



TOM MCRAE
ÉTRANGE HIVER
BUZZARD TREE LP / CD

Étrange Hiver (Strange Winter) is UK songwriter, Tom McRae's 9th studio album. An exquisite collection of original duets with renowned French artists, such as Keren Ann, Chien Noir, Alex Beaupain, Clou and more.

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it's a **happening** thing

Beyond Time And Place

DOROTHY MOSKOWITZ's music continues to astound, 55 years later. **CAMILLA AISA** tunes in

"It must look like I'm having some sort of renaissance," Dorothy Moskowitz (now Falarski) admits. Born in 1940, she formed pioneering *avant*-psych group The United States Of America in '67 with Joseph Byrd, and released a new album with The United States Of Alchemy last year. She's now presenting another project with Swedish producer Peter Olof Fransson aka Retep Folo. Hauntological gem *The Afterlife* shows an artist creating some of her most spellbinding work. "The truth is, I never really stopped being a musician," she points out. "What stopped for a long time was music industry's interest in me. I didn't fight it but continued trying to reach people's hearts in local productions and music teaching. My approach to music took a radical shift when I left the expensive confines of analogue recording and picked up digital skills. It's opened up a rich world of global file-sharing and I see no limits ahead."

Meeting online in 2019, Moskowitz and Fransson shared thoughts on a variety of themes: nature, constant threats to our planet, paranormal effects and, as Fransson called it, "a higher dimensional force at work in what might happen after death", a concept that took a deeper turn when Fransson's mother passed away. The sonic conjuration of an afterlife soon took shape. "Peter's music elicited imagery and the actual words came to me unbidden, a near-improvisational experience," Moskowitz looks back. "That's where the irrational comes into the picture, not in my beliefs per se, but in the way I work. I don't really start with an idea when writing or singing. The emotion comes first. I embroider it and then look back on what I've done."

There's a constant belief characterising the different stages of Moskowitz's multi-faceted life as an artist: collaboration is key. "I think I'm able to stay active because I typically work with other people. I've been collaborative in all my various careers in music, from rock to jazz, to children's theatre, to studio work and finally to teaching. When I found myself sadly outliving many musical colleagues, I finally asked a vibrant older friend for advice. 'Get younger friends.' Peter Olof Fransson is one of them."

Just like when she was exploring unknown sonics with The United States Of America over five decades ago, Dorothy is still looking ahead. "I seem to find ways to escape from the present, one way or another. I confess that I'm constantly thinking ahead to the next project or collaboration. In order to do this authentically, I have to somehow stay 'in tune' with the past and at my age, there's plenty of it."

The Afterlife is out now on Buried Treasure

Dorothy thinks "higher dimensional forces"

hear & now

PHOTO: JULIAN HAND

The Hanging Stars' **RICHARD OLSON** shares his current fave raves

LISTENING (NEW)

It's been a while since I overwhelmingly fell for an album, but I did for Esther Rose's *Safe To Run*. When we played The Americana Festival in Nashville last year we kept bumping into her and she opened for us at Third Man Records. When I got home, I couldn't listen to anything else for weeks. The songs are simple yet intricate, her voice is effortless, and the lyrics are just phenomenal. I truly need to up my game to reach anywhere near her level of storytelling. It'd be a sin not to mention Bill Ryder Jones' *Iechyd Da* as well.

LISTENING (OLD)

I find it so hard to get into albums with the way most of us listen to music nowadays. And I find it even more frustrating how I find myself hearing and loving a song and not even remembering who the artist is. It's a form of cultural gluttony. Having said that, I've recently realised the greatness of Mott The Hoople. I never really paid much attention to them in the past, but 'Backsliding Fearlessly' and 'When My Mind's Gone' is deeply soulful music with just the right amount of grit, attitude and cheekiness. Ian Hunter for president.

READING

I've been fan of John Niven's straight-talking, hilarious, trashy, bizarre and sometimes pulp-esque novels for a while but his latest, *O Brother*, is completely different. Dealing with his and his brother's childhood, subsequent problems and eventual tragic demise in a new town in Scotland in the '70s and '80s, it's a very different proposition. Niven showcases his brilliant, often self-deprecating humour, and his writing is as always lucid, intelligent and bright. He paints a picture on which you feel like a fly on the wall.

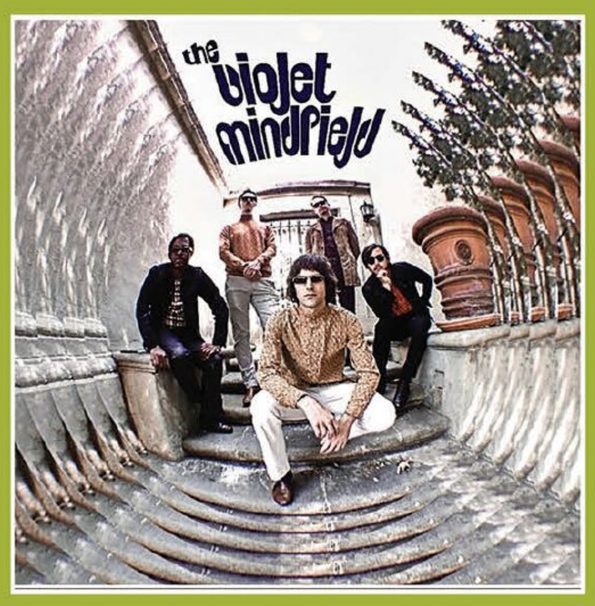
WATCHING

I've recently started re-watching Atlanta. It's really up there with *The Wire*, *The Killing* and, er, *Robin Of Sherwood* in my opinion. I love the characters and surrealism of the plots. The stoned, deadpan humour is ever present while still managing to deal with incredibly serious subjects, some which are impossible for me to fully understand or relate to but still manages to deeply resonate with me. The music selection is also second to none.

As told to Andy Morten

On A Golden Shore out on 8th March on Loose Music

Get deep in the groove



THE VIOLET MINDFIELD

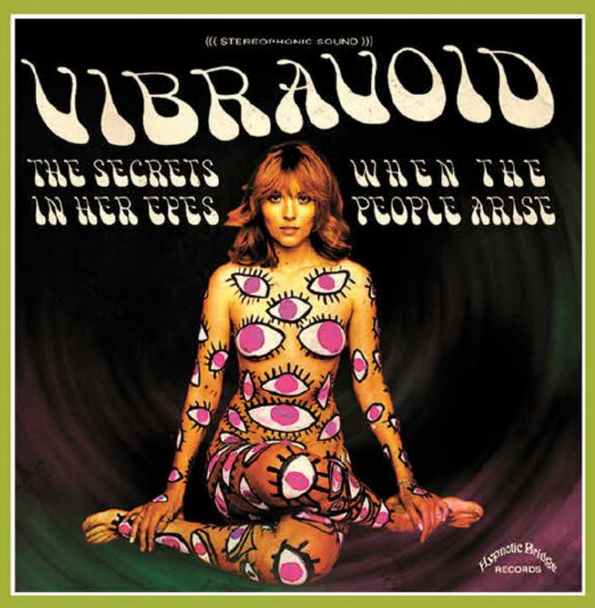
TRAUM

BLACK SNAKE MOAN

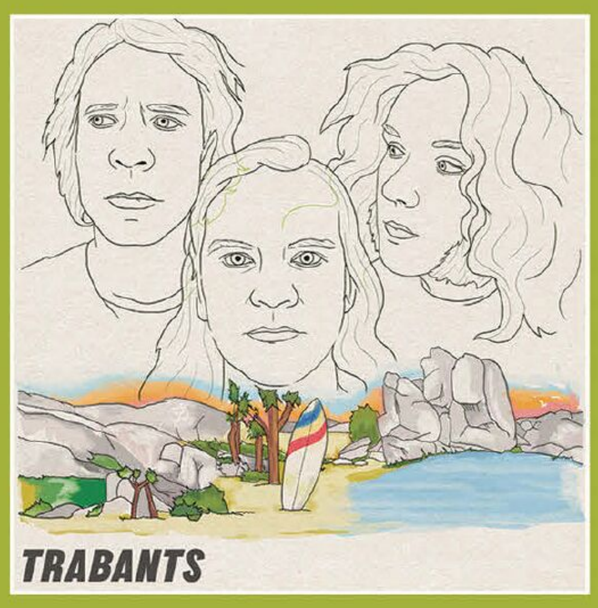
LES POMMES DE LUNE

THE BEVIS FROND

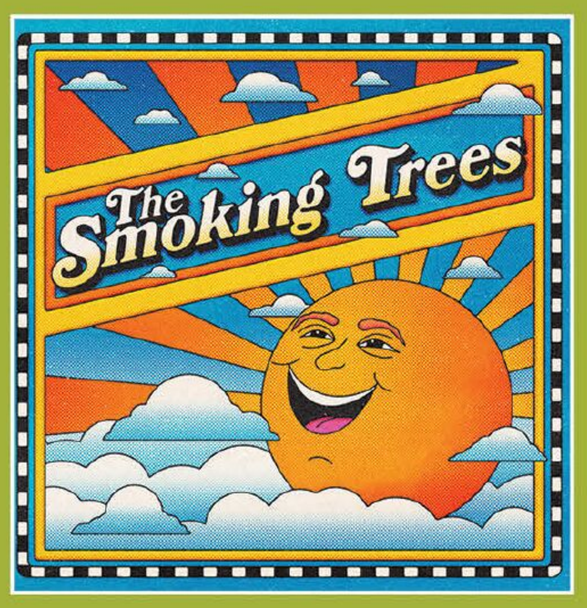
THE PIAGGIO SOUL COMBINATION



VIBRAVOID



TRABANTS



THE SMOKING TREES

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it's a **happening** thing

Siamese Blundstone

"Hip-hop and hi-hats. Bassline riffs and track simplicity." **TESS CARGES** sits down at the drum kit with **BEANS** front man Matt Blach

"I wanted to have drums and percussion in focus, starting the writing process purely with a beat or rhythm idea," says Matt Blach while explaining the origins of their latest album *Boots N Cats*. The record sees the Melbourne outfit testing the boundaries of their music, morphing out of the Aussie psych-rock confines, and growing from the strains of the pandemic to find a new, drum-centric sound. Beans, he says, take on a "raw approach" with an emphasis on jamming and improvising.

Drummer with The Murlocs, Blach is no stranger to collaboration. "All of us spent a lot of time nutting things out and usually everyone has input or a piece of the puzzle from… a 'skeleton' idea, a couple chords/riffs/ideas or drum beat, usually."

Like so many great records that have come out in the past year, this one, too, was transfigured by the pandemic. "This was an entirely different approach to our two previous albums. [Due] to COVID we couldn't see each other. I had a whole bunch of voice memos on my phone, a small recording set-up and a garage with drums whilst I was living with [Beans' guitarist] Jack. I virtually ended up recording and engineering the entire album and played every part besides a track where Jack played drums, and he wrote 'Kookaburra'. Obviously, the recording process was not how we like to do things usually, but it was a way to adapt and try to keep music coming out; wanting to keep the ball rolling, so to speak." The album benefits from their meticulousness; the jam-infused meanderings became refined and tightened in the process.

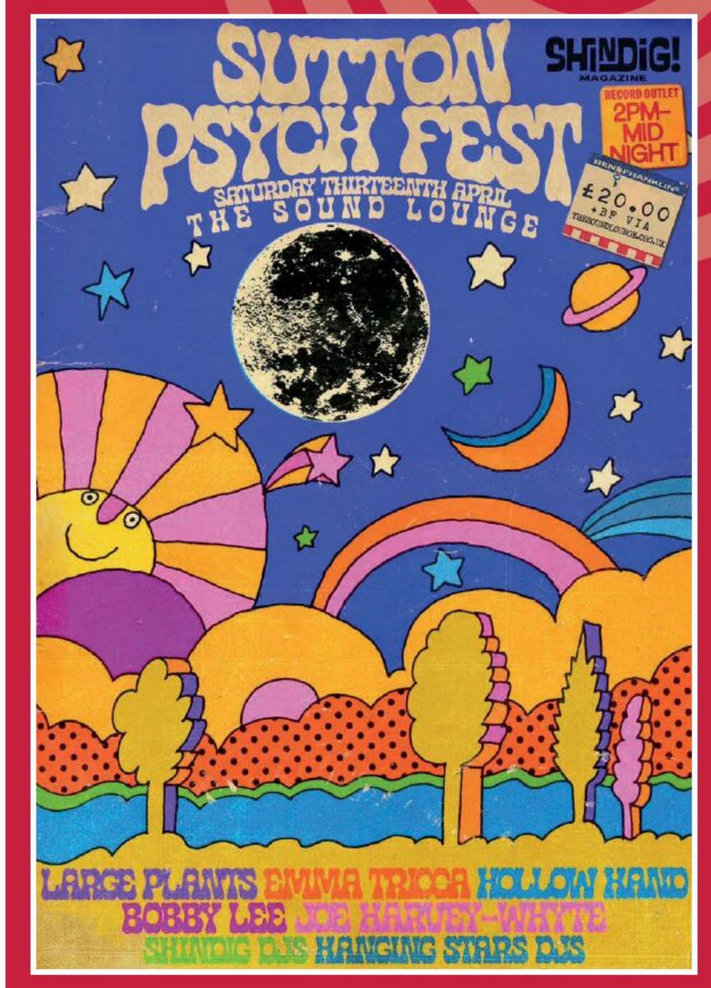
Though the album is markedly Beans-y, *Boots N Cats* is a sort of departure, too. When asked about his current musical influences, Matt gave a surprising answer: "A huge inspiration was hip-hop and hi-hats. Bassline riffs and track simplicity. I was listening to things like Wu-Tang, *Tulips* by Frank Maston, Gorillaz, which has helped branch or show variation and diversity from our previous releases and sound." The influences seem obvious when listening to *Boots N Cats*. Sometimes punching like Wu-Tang or bouncing like The Meters, Beans have found a new sound with a lot of soul.

"Listening to things like Wu-Tang, Tulips by Frank Maston, Gorillaz has helped branch or show variation and diversity from our previous releases"

Boots N Cats is out now on Fuzz Club

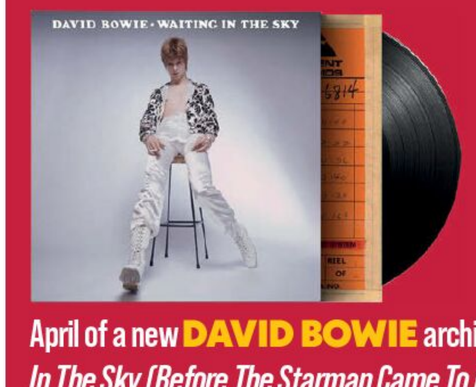
Beans, "nutting things out" for a new sound
PHOTO: DANYSHA HARRIOTT.TIF

good **news**



Date: Saturday 13th April. Location: The Sound Lounge. Event: The inaugural **SUTTON PSYCH FEST**. Tickets are now available for a showcase of cosmic sounds at the award-winning grass roots music venue on the Surrey/London border. The stellar line-up spans from folk and country acoustics to acid and prog-rock acts including Hollow Hand, Bobby Lee, Large Plants, Emma Tricca and Joe Harvey-Whyte. Should that not be enough to entice you, there's also the prospect of deejay sets by none other than our own *Shindig!* editors. This not-for-profit, carbon neutral, community hub is well worth your support.
thesoundlounge.org.uk

London's iconic Roundhouse hosts its seventh **IN THE ROUND FESTIVAL** between 18th and 27th April. An eclectic range of emerging and established musicians will take to the celebrated circular stage. *The Songs Of Joni Mitchell*, hosted by Cerys Matthews, is already sold out but tickets are still available for another unique themed performance, *Death Songbook*. Promising solace and celebration as much as sorrow, the event brings together the talents of Brett Anderson, Charles Hazlewood, Gwenno and The Paraorchestra. The festival also features intimate shows by Tirzah, Vashti Bunyan. Joe-Armon Jones, Jlin, Lucy Rose, Samara Joy, and Lonnie Holley and Matana Roberts.
roundhouse.org.uk



Let the children boogie! Parlophone Records have announced the release for Record Store Day on 20th April of a new **DAVID BOWIE** archival release, *Waiting In The Sky (Before The Starman Came To Earth)*. The record is taken from the Trident Studios tapes created in December 1971 for the provisional track listing of *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars*. Out go three songs from the finished album that had yet to be recorded, 'Rock 'n' Roll Suicide', 'Starman' and Suffragette City'. In come 'Holy Holy', 'Velvet Goldmine' and Bowie's versions of Chuck Berry's 'Round And Round' and Jacques Brel's 'Amsterdam'. The artwork features an arrestingly androgynous image of Bowie by photographer Brian Ward.
davidbowie.com

THE BLACK CROWES

HAPPINESS BASTARDS

THE BLACK CROWES
FIRST ALBUM IN 15 YEARS
PRODUCED BY JAY JOYCE

FEATURING **WANTING AND WAITING**

what's in a **label**?

Liquid Gold

German label **SULATRON** has been soaring the psychedelic heights for nigh on 20 years. **SARAH GREGORY** chats to its celestial mastermind Dave Schmidt

Dave Schmidt – AKA Sula Bassana AKA Sulatron online shop and record label – has spent his life embracing cosmic music at every level. Inspired by the electronic connoisseurs of the '70s – Tangerine Dream, Klaus Schulze, Kitaro, Pink Floyd – Schmidt kicked off his musical career nearly 40 years ago as keyboardist in electronic duo Solaris. But before long he had his head turned.

"I heard *Other Way Out* by Sun Dial at a friend's place and fell in love with that album. That was the reason I started my first rock band Liquid Visions, where I left my synthesisers behind and started playing bass." Dabbling with psych, space-rock and ambient music, Schmidt has also launched his incredibly prolific solo project Sula Bassana in 2002. It was the need to get this music out there that triggered the idea of setting up his own label.

"I lost my job and was searching for ideas. So, it was a logical step to release my first solo album on CD in 2004. It was a good time for selling a lot of CDs back then." Music making is his first true love – he's currently in five bands – but Sulatron is a big part of his life, pragmatic or not. "The label is great work too and without the label and my online shop I couldn't survive."

The first three releases on Sulatron were his own, but then he began to branch out. "The releases are definitely mind-expanding in a way I like. Most bands on my label are friends of mine anyway. I'm not only into long tracks or instrumental stuff!" says Schmidt. "The album must reach or touch my soul." His first release was little known Norwegian psych-rockers Seid followed by two reissues of the German kosmische band Electric Orange. Since then, the label has gone from strength to strength and while it may exist partly as a vehicle to shift his own records, Sulatron is also an invaluable source of experimental, psych, kosmische, and ambient sounds that may not see the light of day elsewhere.

There are some names on the Sulatron roster that will no doubt be familiar to readers of *Shindig!* including Finnish prog-rockers Permanent Clear Light and neo-psychmeisters Sun Dial, but Schmidt is keen to emphasise that nothing is off limits. "Hard-rocking space-rock of Farflung from USA, or the library psych-kraut by Centre El Muusa or Estrada Orchestra from Estonia," enthuses Schmidt. "I love them all!"

"I'm not only into long tracks or instrumental stuff!"

Sula Bassana (aka Dave Scmidt), happy with his vintage keys

PHOTO: KILIAN SCHLOEMP

next issue

THE ANIMALS

How the Geordie tough guys transitioned from wild R&B to pop-soul and became the template for the US garage band explosion

30 YEARS OF SHINDIG!

We look back on our first 150 issues: the artists, the new music, the reissues and compilations, books and live shows that shape our world. Musicians, collaborators and supporters talk about what *Shindig!* means to them

PLUS...

THE LEMON TWIGS,
THE BLACK CROWES,
ULTRASONIC GRAND PRIX,
DONNA BLUE,
THE GALILEO 7

NEW ALBUMS FROM

GOSPELBEACH,
PYE CORNER AUDIO,
SHADOW SHOW,
PROJECT GEMINI,
BIG BOSS MAN

REISSUES FROM

DAVID BOWIE,
ISAAC HAYES,
SCOTT FAGAN,
PETE HAM,
SLADE, PEOPLE

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

PUBLISHED 4th APRIL

Bill Fay Group

Tomorrow Tomorrow and Tomorrow

Out Now

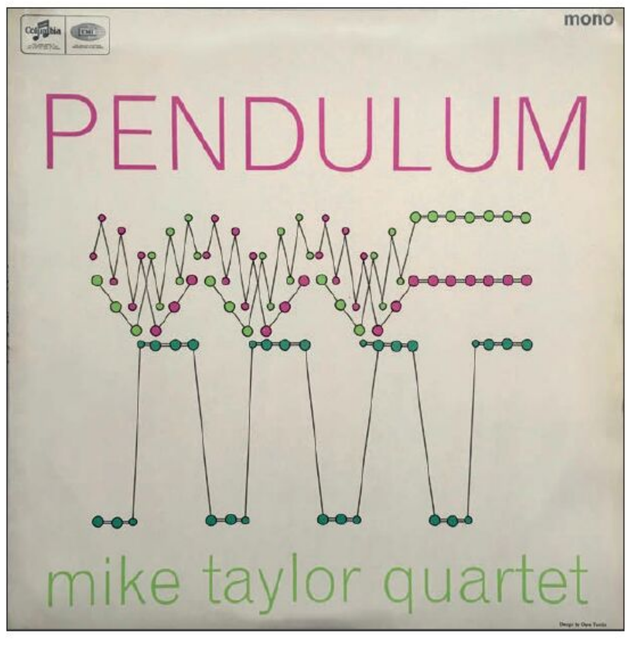
DEAD OCEANS

family album

Mike Taylor circa 1962. "A totally uncompromising musician"

England Swings

MIKE TAYLOR QUARTET'S *PENDULUM* remains a singular entry in the mid-60s UK jazz canon, as **RICHARD MORTON JACK** attests



Born in West London on 1st June 1938, and raised by his paternal grandparents, Ronald Michael Taylor attended the private Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith, where he played piano and clarinet and was strongly drawn to jazz. Following a stint as a trainee at an advertising agency and a period of National Service, he worked for his grandfather as a salesman, but was more interested in transcribing and analysing jazz records on the family's baby grand.

He began to develop ideas based on repetitive harmonic patterns underlying a score, devising radical arrangements of standards as well as original compositions. According to the trumpeter Ian Carr, "Instead of learning standard tunes first and then trying to write his own compositions, he began at the very outset by playing little-known compositions and eventually his own themes. It was only in later years that he came to learn the standard tunes which are in every jazz musician's repertoire. This also helps to account for his unique development – during the formative years he didn't associate with many other musicians because he had little in common with them."

In '61 he married a pretty jazz lover named Ann and formed a group of his own, involving saxophonist Dave Tomlin and drummer Ginger Baker. According to double bassist Ron Rubin, at this time, "You could hardly have found a more immaculate and polite chap than Mike. He was almost in the Ivy League mould – highly intelligent, well-read and thoughtful, as well as a totally uncompromising musician." For Dave, "The Mike Taylor Quartet tried not to sound like anyone else – very difficult, as so many players had already broken most of the new ground, so to find spaces in between them was hard. But we did try."

Mike had a sense of humour but struck most as guarded and inscrutable. "He was introverted, and in many ways cold about personal and intimate communication," says his friend Mike Burke. "He was totally and almost exclusively into music – listening, composing, playing... The only other thing I thought he was somewhat interested in was movies, especially art movies." Dave Tomlin remembers high-spirited parties at which their gang would dance the twist – all except Mike, who would "stand in front, watching us through a faceted prism from a chandelier, which he carried in his pocket".

Mike taped the Quartet's rehearsals, evolving compositions from happy accidents in their improvisations, responding especially to moments of emotional communication. His meticulousness became renowned: he eschewed manuscript paper, preferring large artists' pads onto which he would painstakingly draw the precise number of staves needed for the piece he was writing, with a five-pointed pen.

The group shared bills with Manfred

Taylor and bassist Ron Rubin

"I never heard him play a conventional piece of music on the piano, and don't even know if he knew how to"

Mann, Dick Morrissey, Joe Harriott, Graham Bond and others, and had a regular Sunday night spot at The Marquee. In late '63, Jon Hiseman joined on drums. He recalled, "Mike seemed quiet and unassuming but sure of himself. He appeared to have a wisdom that came from clarity of purpose… I never heard him play a conventional piece of music on the piano, and don't even know if he knew how to. Instead, he'd reduce standards to a few notes, then improvise around them. He was always smoking dope – he never played unless he had smoked a lot before."

In the spring of '64, Tony Reeves replaced Ron on double bass. "Playing with Mike was a double-edged sword," he says. "The music was highly original but could be very difficult. I suppose he was a very competent pianist, rather than a virtuoso – what was important was his imagination and inventiveness." Mike was becoming more obsessive in his pursuit of originality, making bookings hard to come by ("He wouldn't play other people's rubbish to get a gig," as the poet Pete Brown put it), and sometimes the Quartet would earn just two pounds between them for a whole evening.

By all accounts, Mike was becoming harder to communicate with by '65. One factor was the breakdown of his marriage; Dave speculates it might have been provoked by his being "so obsessed with music that he didn't give Ann much attention". The lovelorn Mike moved to a flat in Kew. He was still working for his grandfather's firm, but life became more chaotic when he offered the spare room to the notoriously undisciplined Graham Bond.

The Quartet remained a going concern and supported Ornette Coleman at Croydon's Fairfield Halls in August '65. It was one of the most eagerly anticipated jazz events of the year, and an important opportunity to showcase their fiercely idiosyncratic music. Alas, the impatient audience received them coolly, but Ian Carr was stunned and mentioned Mike to Denis Preston, Britain's pre-eminent jazz producer. He promptly invited them to make an album in his Lansdowne Studios in Holland Park in October.

"It took no time to record – we knew what we were doing from playing the pieces at gigs, so we just turned up and played them in the studio one day," says Tony. "We just went in, played the set once through and left," confirms Dave. The first three tracks were radical reworkings of 'But Not For Me', 'Exactly Like You' and 'A Night In Tunisia', while Side Two was reserved for Mike's compositions 'Pendulum', 'To Segovia' and 'Leeway'.

Restless and spiky as they may seem on first listening, there's plenty of melody in there too, and Mike's sheer attention to detail sets him apart from his contemporaries – as saxophonist Dave Gelly puts it, "At the time a lot of the music going on was all this splurging noise, but Mike's was specific and finicky, very intimate." Their music was never going to find mainstream success, but compromise was not an option. On the back cover Ian Carr quoted Mike stating with Zen-like simplicity, "This is what I want to do."

Pendulum crept out on EMI's Columbia imprint in late April '66, in a striking cover (designed by Dave) based on the final bars of 'Pendulum' itself. "This record is something of a landmark in British jazz," began Ian's notes. "*Pendulum* is not merely a 'promising debut': it is an exquisite performance by a quartet which has created its own music – a whole way of playing which is mature, honest and fully understood by the four musicians. It must be listened to with an open mind and acute ears, for it is genuinely improvised – there are none of the old clichés on this LP." Reviewers enthusiastically agreed, but the album received no advertising support from EMI and no media attention beyond the reviews, and sold in tiny numbers.

In the months following the sessions, Dave Tomlin and Tony Reeves left the Quartet, the Taylors' business crashed and things went frighteningly awry with Mike. He began to take LSD almost daily and to exhibit symptoms of schizophrenia. Denis Preston remembered being amazed to learn that he was washing up in a restaurant, and his aunt later stated that he had tried to gas himself at this time "due to his inability to be recognised as a musician". In place of the smart young man in suit and tie who would talk eloquently and passionately about music was an unkempt bohemian who communicated largely in hand gestures. In the parlance of the time, he had dropped out. S!

Richard Morton Jack's Labyrinth: British Jazz On Record 1960-75 is available from lansdownebooks.com

The Jaynetts in 1963. Clockwise from top left: Lezli Washington, Yvonne Bushnell, Ethel Davis

A Thorn Between The Roses

How did an opportunistic girl group knock-off become an outsider anthem and spawn dozens of cover versions?

ANDY MORTEN goes downtown with '**SALLY GO 'ROUND THE ROSES**'

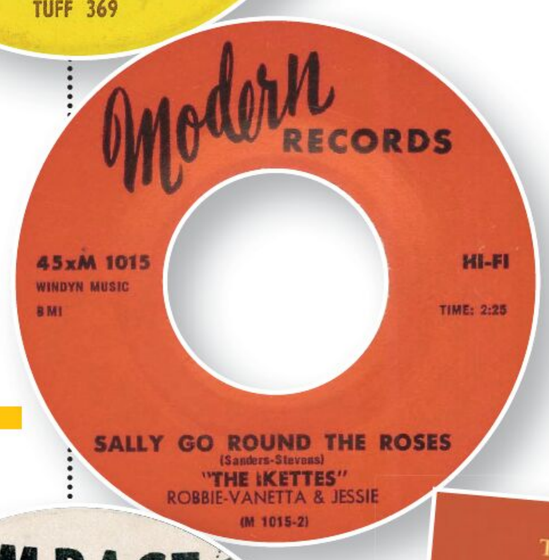
It all begins innocently enough: "Sally go round the roses / Sally go round the pretty roses." It's a nursery rhyme set to a twinkling, jazzy bossa nova R&B beat that bears all the hallmarks of the NYC girl group sound that was blossoming in 1963. Then things take a turn. "Roses they can't hurt you." Why would they want to hurt you? "Sally don't you go, don't you go downtown." Why not? In case you see something you shouldn't? Sure enough, "The saddest thing in the whole wide world is to see your baby with another girl." The female singers' voices are curiously disembodied – almost spectral – as they offer Sally warning after warning, all of which are ignored, leaving our protagonist with one final piece of advice: "Sit and cry where the roses grow, not a soul will know."

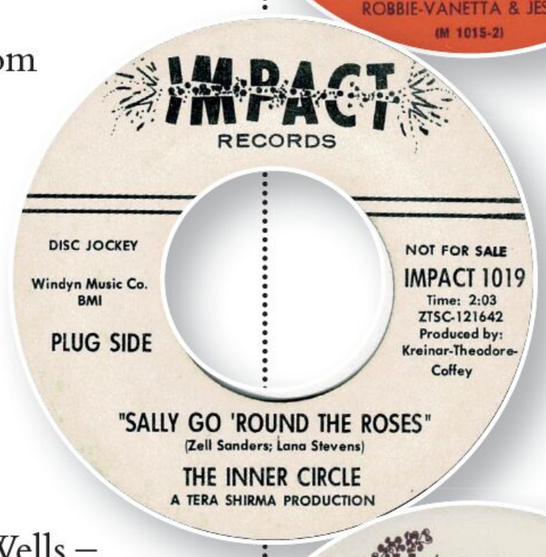
We're listening to 'Sally Go 'Round The Roses', the August '63 single by The Jaynetts. It's a singular entry in the girl group canon, both in terms of its malevolent, otherworldly atmosphere and its fascinating afterlife.

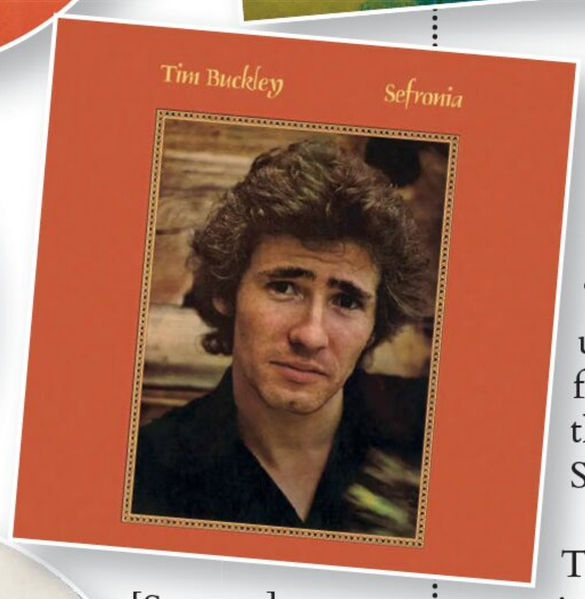
As with many songs cut in the wake of

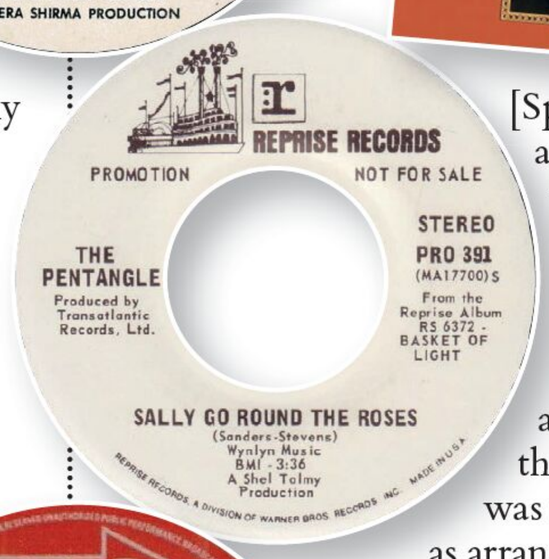
'Sally Go 'Round The Roses' co-writers Zelma Sanders and Lona Stevens (below)

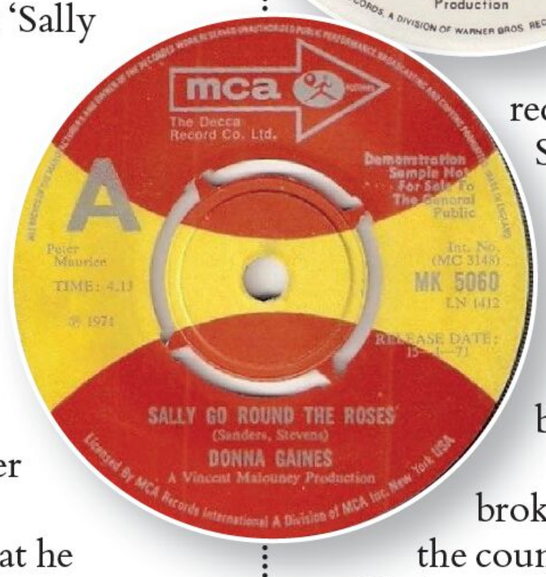
"I played the record for Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. They loved it and offered to buy it and reimburse Abner Spector for all his expenses"











female-fronted chart hits from the stables of Phil Spector, Goffin & King, Bert Berns, Leiber & Stoller and their ilk, 'Sally' was written to order and recorded by an ad-hoc studio aggregation. The Jaynetts comprised at least five singers – Yvonne Bushnell, Ethel Davis, Ada Ray Kelly, Johnnie Louise Richardson and Mary Sue Wells – and, according to some accounts, as many as 15 others, including future Peaches & Herb star Marlene Jenkins. Chess Records A&R man Abner Spector (no relation, improbably) instructed Zelma Sanders, owner of NYC label J&S Records, to write something to capitalise on the girl group trend. Sanders, in cahoots with Spector's wife Lona Stevens, came up with 'Sally Go 'Round The Roses'.

The song was recorded during a then-unheard of and prohibitively expensive week of sessions (an estimated $60,000) utilising session men including guitarist and future hit writer Al Gorgoni. Artie Butler, Lieber & Stoller's favoured pianist and arranger, has claimed that he played all the other instruments, writing on his website in 2018, "First I played the piano. Then I added the drums. When I added the bass, I borrowed the secretary's lipstick and marked the locations of the notes I needed on the upright bass since I did not play bass at all. Then I played the B3 organ and tambourine." The various singers were brought in to add more and more vocal parts as the recording grew denser and more complex. When Spector heard the finished product, he reportedly hated it. "He was really angry," Butler wrote. "He felt that I wasted his money. I disagreed with him. I played the record for Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. They loved it and offered to buy it and reimburse him for all his expenses. When I went back to [Spector] and told him that Leiber & Stoller loved it, he had second thoughts about it." In the end, Butler was credited solely as arranger on the record, which appeared on Spector's own Tuff label, distributed by Chess. Flip the single over and you can "sing along without The Jaynetts" on the "instrumental background".

Curiously, 'Sally' first broke on the other side of the country, in San Francisco. It quickly became a national hit, peaking at #2 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 for two weeks. Its success in SF cannot be underestimated, its influence becoming palpable on the generation of folk and rock acts that immediately followed.

Before that, the song was instantly recorded in identikit fashion by a faceless group variously known as The Belles and The Kittens for Nashville "cover factory" Hit Records, while in the UK, Vernon Girls member Lyn Cornell cut a quick-off-the-mark version released in October '63. New Zealand weighed in with The Glendelles' heavy-handed reading; Sweden with The Kays' easy-listening take, both in '64. Soulful updates came along in the form of The Ikettes' January '66 B-side and Detroit one-shots The Inner Circle's breakbeat-heavy December single. Normie Rowe, Mitch Ryder, Peter & Gordon and others soon joined the fray. Joan Baez is shown singing the song in '67 Dylan movie *Don't Look Back*.

Perhaps the most significant rendition – at least historically, if not musically – is The Great Society's. Captured live at The Matrix in San Francisco sometime in '66 and released two years later as *Conspicuous Only In Its Absence* to capitalise on singer Grace Slick's success with Jefferson Airplane, the group opened their set with a brooding six-minute 'Sally' that nails the song's sinister undertones to the kind of acid-fried coffee-house folk-rock hybrid that would soon characterise the San Francisco sound.

US soft-pop combo The Human Touch released their version, likely inspired by The Great Society's, as a single in September, while Brit legends Pentangle cut the song in their patented acoustic folk-jazz style for October '69's *Basket Of Light* album and routinely performed the song on stage. Notably, it became the US-only B-side of near-hit 'Light Flight'. Donna Summer – still going by her real name Donna Gaines – released a deep, funky version as her UK-only debut single in '71.

Of the numerous recordings that followed (from Judy Collins to Holly Golightly to Susanna Hoffs) and continue to do so (Blasters frontman Dave Alvin's psych side-project The Third Mind cut it for 2023 album *2,*) there's one that still courts controversy. Tim Buckley closed his '73 album *Sefronia* with a suitably deconstructed interpretation that uses the original lyrics as a springboard from which Buckley spins a tale of drinking and braggadocio. He even claimed the writing credit, something that's been returned to Sanders and Stevens on reissues, despite them not writing much of it.

Speculation remains rife about the elliptical nature of the lyrics. Does the ambiguous use of "downtown" allude to scoring drugs, an illegitimate child or even back street abortion? Do the cloaked references to "your baby" (never "he") speak of forbidden homosexuality? Or is it exactly as it appears at face value: a teenage lament to lost love and heartbreak. "Its significance was that it was one of the first songs where the public was not sure of the subject," wrote Stuart Rosenberg in 2008. "The achievement of the song was its ambiguity." S!

The Pleasers. They do what it says on the in

Painted Days

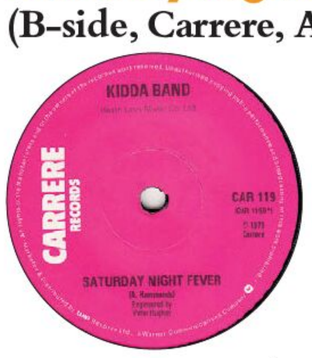
As the '70s warped into the '80s in Britain, a mix of opportunistic ex-punks, mod revivalists, new-wave melodicists and '60s pop aficionados donned skinny ties and bought Rickenbackers and AC30s in the pursuit of the perfect three-minute pop song.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS and **ANDY MORTEN** grab 10 shimmering delights from an overlooked golden era

THE PLEASERS
You Don't Know
(A-side, Arista, August 1978)

They called it "Thamesbeat". Surrey's The Pleasers were early adopters of the music from the decade before, not a million miles away from what The Flamin' Groovies were doing. Signed to a major, and hugely inspired by The Beatles, this is revivalist pop more akin to Rockin' Horse than The Jam, but The Pleasers may well have been one of the first revival bands to don suits, ties and mop tops. To some it may be too close to the source and border on novelty, but there's no denying the charm of the chiming guitars and the overall *joie de vivre* of this masterful beat tune.

KIDDA BAND
Saturday Night Fever
(B-side, Carrere, August 1979)



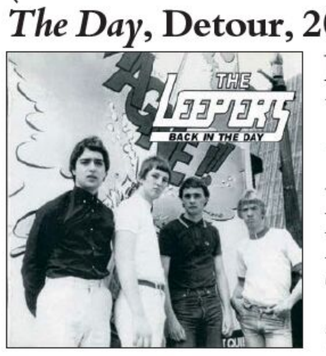
Nuneaton's Kidda Band were signed in 1978, releasing a well-received single on Psycho and appearing regularly at Radio One roadshows. Moving over to Carrere the following year they released 'Fighting My Way Back', its sound centred around melodic pop-punk, not unlike contemporaries Elvis Costello & The Attractions and Eddie & The Hot Rods. Flip 'Saturday Night Fever' is a powerpop gem, the title and lyrical theme opposing The Bee Gees' slick disco music. The song has more hooks than Jack Hargreaves and comes across like The Ramones at their most melodic.

THE DISTRACTIONS
Time Goes By So Slow
(A-side, Factory, September 1979)

Manchester quintet The Distractions' debut single, the third released on the legendary

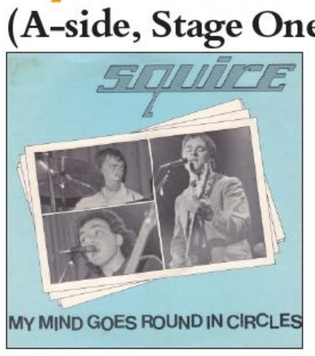
Factory label, comes on like Siouxsie & The Banshees doing The Byrds, its layers of guitars and ethereal synths underpinning Mike Finney's "Joey Ramone does soul" vocal. The B-52's-ish 'Pillow Fight' was the intended A-side but Factory boss Tony Wilson wisely forced a rethink. Not that it mattered. Few bought or even heard the single, but that hasn't stopped it becoming many people's favourite from a summer packed with nascent indie-pop classics.

THE LEEPERS
Paint A Day
(Recorded 1979/80, released on *Back In The Day*, Detour, 2010)



Before signing to Whaam! as Le Mat in 1982 and supporting Duran Duran, these Essex lads were called The Leepers, nailing their amphetamine-laced mod origins to the mast. Terrifically popular in and around Southend, they looked pin sharp as well as making genuinely inspired music. Early adopters of the '67 psych-pop persuasion, echoes of 'Paint A Day' can be heard in later acts like The Aardvarks and The Nerve. It's well and truly one that got away, before being reissued by Detour 14 years ago. Subsequently, it's appeared on both Cherry Red's *Millions Like Us* and Edsel's *Eddie Piller: The Mod Revival*, reaching even more ears.

SQUIRE
My Mind Goes Round In Circles
(A-side, Stage One, June 1980)



Although appearing on *Mods Mayday* and releasing two singles on Secret Affair's Ian Page's I-Spy label – forever ensconcing them in the higher echelons of the 1979 mod revival – Squire always had something more about them than their contemporaries, thanks to the highly melodic songwriting and sweet voice of Anthony Meynell. 'My Mind Goes Round In Circles', the band's third single, was their most mature effort yet, recalling The Who's classic powerpop era with just enough estuary-accented edge to keep it contemporary. It's an undeniable classic of '60s-inspired mod/pop, brimming with the requisite power chords and ringing guitars.

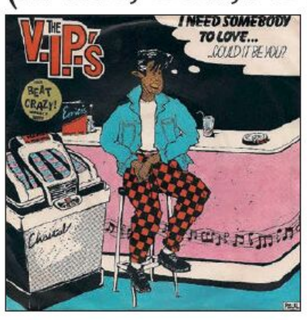
DIRECT HITS
Carnaby Eyes
(From *Collisions At Teen Junction*, Bootleg, 1980)

No relation to the South London act of

"The sound is somewhere between '60s mod-pop and post-punk DIY, with inward-looking, often maudlin lyrics that bely the melodies"

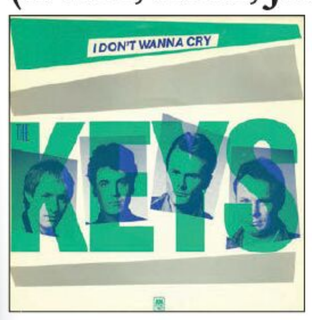
the same name, this Direct Hits hailed from Manchester and cut one self-financed album in 1980 after their contributions to local '79 sampler *Identity Parade* aroused interest. Composed entirely by bassist/vocalist Kevin Durkin, the 12 songs were captured live and lo-fi to tape in one sitting. The sound is somewhere between '60s mod-pop and post-punk DIY, with inward-looking, often maudlin lyrics that bely the melodies. 'The Feeling Has Gone', 'Vanity Girls', 'City Of Manchester' and 'Jenny Remembers' all warrant a mention, but the disillusioned-northerner-on-the-streets-of-London moves of 'Carnaby Eyes' packs a kitchen sink punch.

THE V.I.P'S
I Need Somebody To Love
(A-side, Gem, November 1980)



Before going on to form psych revivalists Mood Six, Guy Morley (guitar) and Paul Shurley (drums) were in this fine powerpop combo that attracted attention around the mod revival, garnering support slots with The Specials, Madness, Secret Affair and Dexy's Midnight Runners. 'I Need Somebody To Love' was the third of five singles the band released between 1978-81. Success eluded them, but, as this mid-tempo Merseybeat/new-wave number shows, they possessed pop smarts galore. This track is full of great harmonies, has a strong chorus, ear worm vocal refrains and enough jangle to cheer up even the most jaded soul. Fab!

THE KEYS
I Don't Wanna Cry
(A-side, A&M, June 1981)



Despite a major label deal, national radio play, a pile of razor-sharp songs, former Wings drummer Geoff Britton in their ranks and none other than Joe Jackson in the producer's chair, London quartet The Keys failed to break through commercially. 'I Don't Wanna Cry' was the third of six singles and seamlessly blends jangling guitars and tight vocal harmonies into three delirious minutes of singalong pop perfection. Accompanying long-player *The Keys Album* is chock full of similarly up-tempo thrills, although none quite reach the heights of this tune.

THE MIXERS
Never Find Time
(From *The Great British Beat Volume 1*, Direct Tapes, August 1983)

Coalescing in the Glasgow area in 1980, The Mixers drew heavily from the pure '60s pop of The Beatles, Hollies and Everly Brothers. However, it wasn't until they relocated to London and fell in with the burgeoning neo-psychedelic crowd that their supercharged guitar-pop found an audience. Of the five extant demos made during this period, the exquisite 'Never Find Time' appeared on *The Great British Beat Volume 1,* compiled and manufactured by London mod-pop act The Direct Hits. The song was joined by 'Love Hurts' for the following year's Whaam! Records sampler *All For Art… And Art For All!* before being exhumed for a '98 single on Vinyl Japan.

SMALL WORLD
Tomorrow Never Comes
(B-side, Valid, November 1983)

A tough mod band from the battlefields of Barking, Essex – equally at home playing Small Faces and Stiff Little Fingers covers on stage – Small World's first single 'Love Is Dead' was released on Dan Treacy's home of psychedelia Whaam! Records in 1981. 'First Impressions' followed two years later and introduced the sound palette of The Jam's '80/81 work as well as sporting two B-sides, of which 'Tomorrow Never Comes' is a dynamic, confident and densely melodic 3:30. Their entire recordings, still eminently listenable, were gathered on Detour's '99 set *Slight Detour*.

New Guitars In Town: Power Pop 1978-82 is out now on Cherry Red

"These are not mere tunes. They are sacrificial death dances for the immortals." The Shadows. L-R: Tony Meehan, Jet Harris, Hank Marvin, Bruce Welch

Men Of Mystery

In this extract from his righteous ode to rock 'n' roll's "weirdos, misfits and deviants", musician and author **LUKE HAINES** celebrates the otherworldly allure of The Shadow that has captivated him since his freak teens

Many of my generation have Darts, Showaddywaddy (both cool) or Abba (not cool) in their DNA; I, however, got lucky. For I have The Shadows in mine. Just as Townshend, Ray Davies, Syd and all those early '60s art-school rockers had been transported by the grooves of 'Apache', I too have the space-age twang of Hank B Marvin careering through my Freak veins. Secondly, listening to this run of near flawless, peerless, early to mid-60s singles, it hits me, like a four-way fucking acid tab, that these were not just vaguely enigmatic and catchy instrumentals that somehow invoke the optimism of the jet age. This sound, is actually a pageant to the ancients. Just take in those titles alone: 'Apache'. 'The Frightened City' (The. Frightened. Fucking. City.), 'The Savage', 'F.B.I.', 'Atlantis', 'Wonderful Land', 'A Place In The Sun', 'Maroc Seven'. These are not mere tunes. They are sacrificial death dances for the immortals. Take heed, and this is no idle notion, The Shadows, in their imperial phase from 1960 to '62, were psychedelic as all hell.

As early as '59, The Shadows had already carved out a palpable place for themselves as Cliff Richards' backing group, with Hank tossing out louche and threatening licks over Cliff's one convincing stab at proper rock 'n' roll: 'Move It'. However, by the turn of the new decade, Cliff thought he had shrewdly weighed up his options,

and came to the wrong conclusion: that there would be few and far places in the firmament for an English rock. Cliff catastrophically threw in his lot on the side of "wholesomeness". Unrighteous, Cliff.

The Shadows were by now striking out alone as a mainly instrumental outfit, and might have been remembered as mere light entertainment journey-fodder, had they not toured with an unsuccessful singer-songwriter called Jerry Lordan. One provincial night, pre show, Lordan found himself hit upon by the Shads for any spare tuneage; he responded by plucking out an eight-note motif (E, A, E, A, F#, E, D, E) on a ukulele. It was one helluva tune. Even on the dreaded uke. Within weeks the group had entered EMI Studios with producer Norrie Paramor at the controls and recorded the instrumental – previously unnamed – now brilliantly titled 'Apache'. Woah, fucking Apache.

You are a teenager in '60, you are listening to Saturday Club on the radio. In between the BBC Light Orchestra renditions of American rock 'n' roll hits, and children's records like 'Nellie The Elephant', you will receive your first exposure to The Shadows' 'Apache'. This is what you will hear: four bars of ominous tom-toms, before a banshee shrieking fanfare played on a fiesta-red Fender Stratocaster from outer space. It's the muezzin calling the demob masses of austerity Britain to prayer; the prayer that will lift the pea souper and banish post-war drabness for ever. Then Hank blinks away the last sleepy-dust of the 195, and as if it was the first thing that came into his head, effortlessly rips out a lead line, that lead line. The lead line that any guitarist can play within six weeks of picking up the instrument – downg ding, downg ding dawng, dow dow downg. Show me a guitarist who hasn't played that riff and I'll show you a fucking liar. After two minutes and 52 seconds of rock 'n' roll perfection (lead guitar through tape delay, double-tracked rhythm guitar, bass and drums, all perfectly separated in the mono), you will want to hear it again. It is impossible to listen to 'Apache' just once.

There was a lot of instrumental fodder clogging up the British hit parade in the early '60s. But compare 'Apache' to its nearest counterpart – The Tornados' more lauded 'Telstar' – and it is clear that it is the former that is truly not of this earth. Hank's Valhalla to Joe Meek's Val Singleton.

I offer no mealy mouthiness when I state that 'Apache' defined a kind of pagan futurism. That it achieved this without a single member of The Shadows – Hank, Bruce Welch (rhythm guitarist), Jet Harris (hooligan bass) and drummer Tony Meehan – all originally known as The Geordie Boys – imbibing anything more hallucinogenic than a pint of Newkie Brown, matters not one micro-dot.

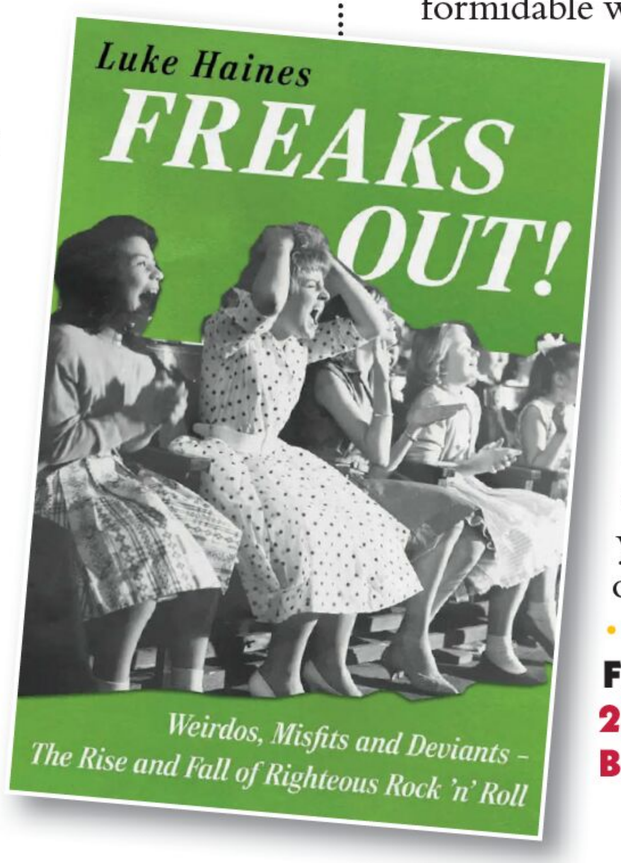
"It's the muezzin calling the demob masses of austerity Britain to prayer; the prayer that will lift the pea souper and banish post-war drabness for ever"

Within a month of its release in July '60, 'Apache' was #1 on the UK singles chart, staying there for six weeks. It went on to be a massive hit around the globe. The psych vibes were strong, and as 'Apache' dominated the global airwaves, it was no coincidence that out in the real Apache tribe territory of New Mexico, the lysergic explorers of the '60s decade, were hanging out, and digging for, and digging, the holy sacrament: psilocybin – magic mushrooms. The Flesh Of The Gods. On 9th August '60, as The Shadows occupied the British top spot on the charts, errant Harvard psychology lecturer Dr Timothy Leary, staying in Mexico City approaching 40 years old, and tiring of his middle-aged martini-academic lifestyle, took hallucinogenic mushrooms for the first time.

Maybe, as the trip comes on, it is time to cool out a little. Time to take stock, and whilst it is true that 'Apache' sounded as timeless as a Mayan death pageant, there were other Shadows records. Oh yes. So for every lean mean brooder like 'Geronimo', 'Man Of Mystery', 'The Savage' and 'Atlantis', there would be singles such as 'Guitar Tango', 'Shindig' and 'Foot-tapper'. Records that even Jimmy Young might have found to be a bit, well, square.

Within less than three years of the release of 'Apache' and in strict accordance with the pop lifespan of the times, The Shadows were merely one of their former selves. In the pre-pre-irony world, where there was nowhere to hide and the Shads had revealed themselves. The dance moves were looking corny, and the instrumentals were sounding formulaic. Worst of all, they had not broken their bonds with Cliff Richard (wince at them mugging away most un-psychedelically through Cliff's early '60s movies). The Shadows were light entertainment by association, and in post-war early '60s Britain the new species of "Teenagers" could only take so much light entertainment. They wanted something else. Something that The Shadows had on their earlier records, the promise of freedom. The promise of the West. Just like Elvis and Chuck and Gene and Little Richard and Eddie had given them, before promptly scarpering (to the army, to the jailbait, to the booze, to the religion, to the death). The people wanted sun gods.

The people didn't get sun gods, they got insect gods. Beatle gods. The Shadows' last massive single of the '60s was 'Wonderful Land', Once again written by Jerry Lordan and produced by Norrie Paramor, 'Wonderful Land' was an even bigger commercial success than 'Apache', taking up residence at the magic spot for eight formidable weeks. It's hardly surprising, every nano second of this transcendental record wordlessly signals a message to the people: "It's 1962 and everything is going to be… Alright!" 'Wonderful Land' was The Shadows most enduring recording and second great psychedelic single. By the following year the insects had taken over. S!



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20 questions

"It's either a lost chord or a lost key, one of the two. I don't understand why people don't do it more. You don't have to be a genius to find it." Sean O'Hagan, still in search of...

How The Best Was Won

SEAN O'HAGAN has not only written for and performed with Microdisney, Stereolab and The High Llamas, he's also arranged and produced a wide array of artists and performers.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS spends two hours in his company, learning of his experiences with Brian Wilson and Arthur Lee, searching for the lost chord, arranging strings, and goats on hills. Sadly, there's no space for a fascinating commentary on his beloved contemporary R&B and hip-hop

Microdisney with Sean (front) and Cathal Coughlan (second right); 1984's *Everybody Is Fantastic*; Sean's '90 solo debut

"*Gideon Gaye* was coming from Michael Brown of The Left Banke with added Cluster and Neu! For me, that's a cocktail of beauty"

***Shindig!*:** What is it that first sparked your interest in music and playing it?
Sean O'Hagan: Music was always in my head as a kid. I wasn't very successful in school. I'm not sure whether it was because I was shy or dyslexic, but I wasn't great in school. When you struggle, you basically go back to the thing that you have an innate sense of, and I did have an innate sense of music. I couldn't read it. I didn't have anybody who was musical in the house, but it was in my head, and I was always glued to the radio. I'd walk away from the radio with the tunes in my head, and then I would just expand on the tunes in my head. It was as simple as that. I remember listening to things like 'I Can Hear Music', The Mamas & The Papas, The Equals, The Temptations' 'Ball Of Confusion'… it all made an immense impression on me.

***SD!*:** Cork. London. How have both cities informed you?
SOH: I lived in Ireland as a very small kid, prior to school in Luton, which in itself was a very Irish town. All my friends were Irish, and we went to the local Catholic comprehensive. It was a very working-class upbringing. When we went to Cork in the '70s it was a very disconnected, cultured city. I'd never met middle-class people. I'd never really encountered culture. Cork was the making of me. I woke up. I connected with culture. I learned how to start making music and caught onto that post-punk thing. It was very small. The local Cork eccentricity fed into that, which was the beginning of Microdisney.

***SD!*:** Microdisney was one of the few Irish bands to achieve any notable commercial success and press interest in the UK in the '80s (including a #1 album in the indie charts). Do you look back fondly on that period?
SOH: It all started off as very angry poetic post-punk. A punky funky thing. We did that for two years until Cathal and I decided to move on. We got bored. We heard Scott Walker and The Beach Boys. We said, "Let's make it super simple." We then got rid of everything and went down to an SK10 organ. That's how it started. By doing it with two instruments, you actually have to write songs. And you discover space and melody. We wrote songs every day, nine to five. That's how *Everybody Is Fantastic* was written. I look back very fondly on those early days. Cathal was studying medicine at the time, and I was working in a food factory. There was a huge difference between the two of us. We were close friends and probably both felt a bit isolated. I found in Cathal somebody who brought out the best in me. He discovered my intelligence before I did. That was nice.

***SD!*:** Your influences were quite out of sorts. Who were your kindred spirits?
SOH: There were other people showing us the way, like Billy MacKenzie and The Associates and The Durutti Column. Early Factory, Crépuscule, labels like that. We were just fascinated by it all. And Robert Wyatt. Slightly later, it was stuff like The Daintees, Prefab circa 'Cars And Girls'. And for me Alex Chilton, Black Slate, Daniel Johnson and The Go-Betweens.

***SD!*:** Between 1983 and 1986, Microdisney recorded six Peel sessions. Do you have a favourite one?
SOH: The one with 'Teddy Dogs' and 'Friend With A Big Mouth'. Session two?

***SD!*:** What are your memories of Microdisney's short tour of Poland? What seemed to be people's reaction to the music you played?

SOH: It was during Solidarity, so there were tanks on the streets. There were hotels where only westerners could enter. The furniture was wobbly and falling apart. Telephones could rarely connect. The food was foul; powdered scrambled eggs. We were in transit through East Germany and had a full van search, but the cherry vodka was good. Every promoter claimed they were better friends with Microdisney than the next. There were young dour men in Gdańsk who idolised Joy Division. They asked did we know them. Did we know Morrissey? Huge boulevards in Łódź were empty at three in the afternoon, apart from two or three drunk men shouting.

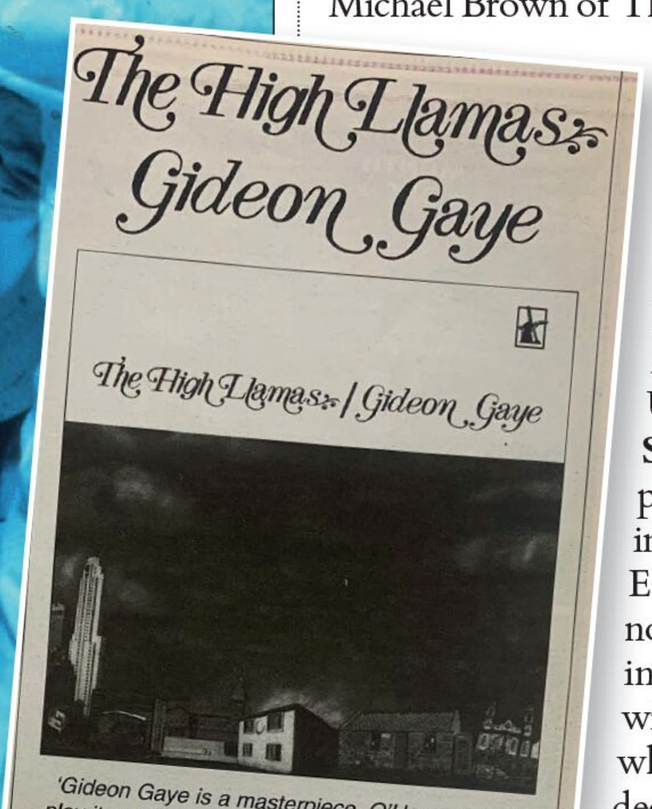
***SD!*:** What led to, and how did you make the transition to, becoming a solo performer/front man after your time alongside Cathal Coughlan in Microdisney? And where did the title of your debut *The High Llamas* come from?

SOH: The *High Lamas* title just came from the fact that I put a llama in a hot air balloon on the cover. It was that simple. But the transition was very difficult. After I had worked with somebody as brilliant and literary as Cathal, it was very hard. I don't think I did make the transition for a very long time, certainly not on that record. It's a very unconfident record. My time in Stereolab gave me a little bit of a hiatus so that I was able to emerge into *Gideon Gaye* with a much more fixed idea of who I was.

***SD!*:** The High Llamas' *Gideon Gaye* took a while to make. Did the album feel like it had been bubbling up within you for a while and needed to be expunged?

SOH: Tim Gane had a lot to do with *Gideon Gaye*. You say it took a long time, it didn't actually. It only took 10 days to record. But yes, it took a long time in gestation. There was an album called *Santa Barbara* before, which was a straightforward pop record; chiming acoustic guitar pop, which I was very proud of. I then soon realised though that I didn't want to make records with a backbeat, a bass part and verse, chorus, verse, chorus. My time in Stereolab was really important because Tim taught me how not to do that. Remember, I'd been in Microdisney, who were nearly successful. We were a very polished pop group by the end. Tim taught me how to completely deconstruct that and to walk away from that perfection and enjoy imperfection and looseness, and real time experimentation in the studio. Even though *Gideon Gaye* was very prepared, the ambition was actually created in the studio with Tim – probably on *Space Age Bachelor Pad Music,* when I was on that record.

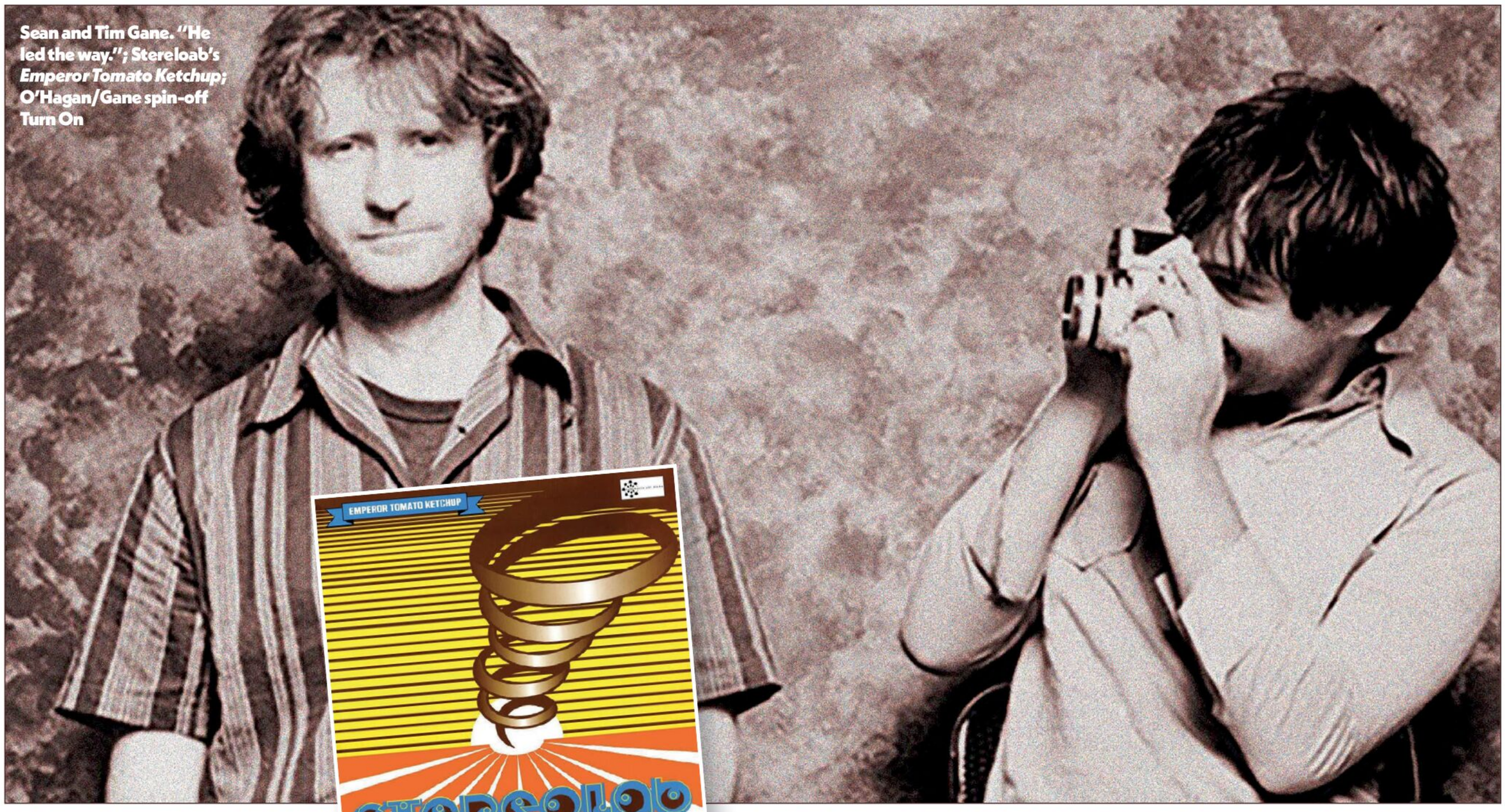
I was thinking of several things when I went in, obviously *Smile* and *Pet Sounds*. I was also thinking of The Left Banke, and John Cale too. I knew that for this record to work, there would be no starts and finishes. It would be a full flow, a little bit like *What's Going On?* That was the first time I wanted to put strings on and could afford three players. I worked with Marcus, who was a cellist in the band. He knew how to do it. I didn't, I was learning from him about string arrangement at the time. Everything had to be extreme. If you had a distorted guitar sound, rather than it being loud, it would be small and thin. The harmonies would go through Leslies, and that wasn't done. We put the drum kits in the next room using the natural reverb. We used upright pianos. Nobody used upright pianos, but we'd use two. We'd record one, and then we'd record another, and we'd have them really, really loose. Stuff like that. It was coming from Michael Brown of The Left Banke with added Cluster and Neu! For me, that's a cocktail of beauty.



High Llamas circa 1994's *Gideon Gaye*; press ad

***SD!*:** What are your memories of The High Llamas accompanying Arthur Lee on his 1994 UK tour?

SOH: Arthur was picked up from a hotel in Bayswater in a white Escort van. There was no budget. He flew in with a filmmaker with him and my mate, who was a painter and decorator, said he'd go and pick him up. Arthur Lee, who's very, very tall, is doubled up after this very long flight. The poor man arrives in New Cross in a place called The Music Room, which was a little basement rehearsal studio. We had all the Llamas there, and this three-piece string



Sean and Tim Gane. "He led the way."; Stereolab's *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*; O'Hagan/Gane spin-off Turn On

section, and flute. He walks into the rehearsal room, and just looks around and sees this band waiting, looking at him, this huge man with a wig, who's jet lagged. And he goes, "Okay, let's hit it," and snapped his fingers. We did 'Orange Skies', and we were really rehearsed. He was knocked out. He was so happy. He couldn't believe it. We rehearsed the whole set, all the classics from the debut right up to *Four Sail*. And then he said, "We're good. This is Love. This is a good Love." He just assumed wherever he went, whoever he joined, that was Love. We then went across the road to a pub where he drank several pints of Guinness. "This is the best Love I've heard in ages, and we're gonna go on tour. We're gonna do this."

He went out for a stroll on the Holloway Road and met a bunch of guys in the Irish pubs and played pool. We were ready to go on stage and he wasn't around. A search party was sent to pick him up. I found him in The Eaglet. He came back and did a great gig, ending with 'Singing Cowboy'. "This is so successful, Arthur," we said. "You're a star. They want more." "Leave them wanting more," he said. And he wouldn't come back on.

The next day I had to play with him at the Albert Hall for the 10th anniversary of Creation Records. He turned up, and he was in a really good state. He played harmonica on 'Signed DC' and I played acoustic guitar. I was terrified about playing 'Andmoreagain', as it's such a hard thing to play. And that was just with me and him on the stage.

Creation asked if I would look after Arthur. I did, but then he disappeared again. When he came back, he was in a terrible state. He lost his mind a little bit. I did a few songs, but then John Head wanted to play the last song and asked if he could borrow my guitar. I went, "Yeah, of course you can." I gave him the guitar and went home. I didn't even listen to it because it was just such a weird day. I'd been abandoned. I was a bit fazed. I did my bit. I guess that I initially thought, "Oh my God, I'm going to be awful on stage." And it was incredible, because we did a great job and we brought that to people. But the expense was really high on my personal health.

"*Hawaii* was, as you know, known to Brian Wilson and The Beach Boys. They were massive fans. They thought this was the way they could get back"

***SD!*:** *Gideon Gaye* appeared to chime with the mid-90s easy-listening/exotica revival. Serendipity, or was there something in the air that various deejays and artists were breathing at that point?
SOH: I would say the only other person at that time who I thought was doing anything similar to me was Neil Hannon. Gilles Peterson was doing a lot of great work. He was making very contemporary house music. But he was also crate digging. He was bringing to the fore a wealth of music that people had passed by. Then there was this kind of postmodernism and obsession with the late '60s, then the '70s. I do like to think that we were cutting the rock. People weren't talking about Les Baxter or Martin Denny back then, but Tim Gane knew all about that. Japan was really important too. It was the capital of crate digging. Japan was beginning to get all the Italian soundtrack things repressed on vinyl. For me, that was amazing. And they loved what we were doing. They thought we were responding to their interests. It was great fun. I never got dragged into the suits and comedy part. It was all a little bit of *Reeves & Mortimer* to me.

***SD!*:** Much has been made of your brief encounter with Brian Wilson. Had his people not intervened, could you ever have seen yourself working with him?
SOH: Look, it could have worked. I was there in 1996 on behalf of Jeremy Pierce and Richard Branson. The idea was to have this massive band on V2 Records. *Hawaii* was, as you know, known to Brian Wilson and The Beach Boys. They were massive fans. They

thought this was the way they could get back. At the time, The Beach Boys weren't speaking to Brian, they were doing things like making country cabaret cover records with Dwight Yoakam. Very strange.

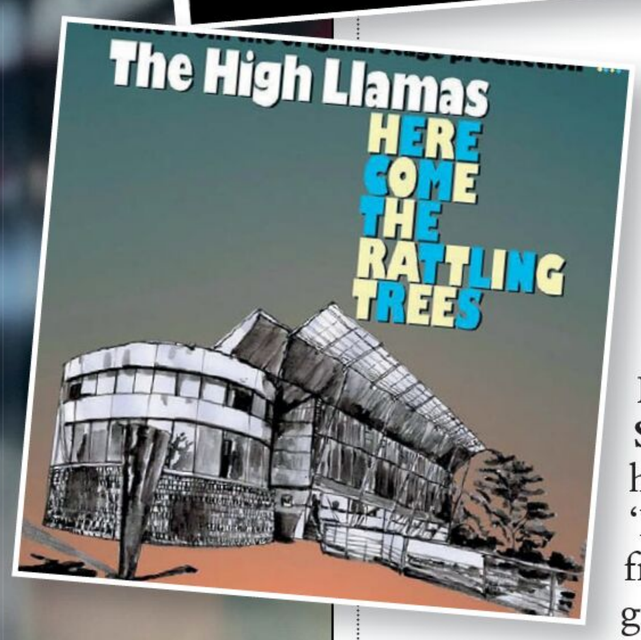
In LA I was taken up to Brian's house to talk about the idea that V2 would sign The Beach Boys with him, and a great record would be made. He was fantastically excited and ran around the room and then started playing 'Proud Mary' on the piano. He then threw us out and said, "I've gotta write, I've gotta write a record. I've gotta write a record."

I was then sent back out with The Beach Boys to convince them that this is the right thing to do. There was some difficulty. There were people who were very open to it. Al was very open to it. And Carl was very open to it. Carl was the best. He was wonderful. He sat with me and said, "You are gonna produce this record and don't let anybody write lyrics. We like terrible lyrics. You produce it. We haven't got a clue how to make this music anymore. You do." We had these incredibly strange meetings in these very plush hotels. I was taken to lawyers in big offices at the top of skyscrapers. I was taken to dinner with a guy called Joe Thomas, who was producing Brian at the time. He wasn't a fan of the idea. Melinda was, she was cute. I've only got good things to say about her. She was very supportive. But again, she was protecting Brian all the time.

I remember playing a song called 'Painters Paint' from [1998 High Llamas album] *Cold And Bouncy*. It was very new at the time. "That's going on the record," they said. "That's great." Al Jardine was really excited. Then I was brought on stage to play with Carl. It was like a test to see if I could play with them. And I did, we played 'Sail On Sailor'. They hadn't played it for 20 years.

"What kind of record do you wanna make?" I was asked. I said, "Let's make *Sunflower* again, because that's the record where you all wrote." They were really excited. I wasn't young, but they said "The kid's got it. The kid's smart." I then heard something the next day about an objection from this lawyer. I was right in the middle of trying to make *Cold And Bouncy*. I thought that record wouldn't get finished, so I said, "Can you please take me home?" It wasn't going to happen because lawyers were just laughing at us. It would have had to been agreed within the band that there was a boss.

Don Was called me when I was there. He told me to be careful. Andy Paley called me. They both said, "This could be amazing for you, but it could also end your career."



SD!: Whilst signed to V2 you came perilously close to achieving mainstream success, especially after Brian Wilson's endorsement of *Hawaii* [1996 album]. Do you ever feel robbed?

SOH: It could have happened. It didn't. 'Nomads' was the single from *Hawaii*. I think it's a great little pop single, but in 1996 asking radio to play a single with banjo on it was challenging. It was Britpop at the time. They were playing Echobelly, and Blur were beginning to really emerge. I came along with this song, which caused a quandary for people here. They loved it in America though. They really got it. We made it quite difficult for people, I think. And do we feel robbed? Yeah. The time wasn't quite right, although some people like Paul Lester were really gunning for it. V2 gave us £30k to make a promo video, which was insane. And do you know who made it? Edgar Wright. He got food poisoning on the day.

SD!: During your time as a member of both The High Llamas and Stereolab, how did you compartmentalise your creativity? Or did you hold your best stuff back for the Llamas?

SOH: In Stereolab Tim led the way. He'd say, "I'm looking for this sound," and play me a record. I was then able to find it on the keyboard or score it for strings or brass. I felt no pressure because I wasn't the boss. It wasn't on me. I worked really hard and really fast and experimented. Tim said,

Sean in 2024; *Here Come The Rattling Trees'* musical theatre; Susan James benefits from Sean's arranging skills
PHOTO: SIMON RUSSELL

there's no wrong. With the arrangements, I would just let my imagination go. But with the Llamas, I always felt pressure. I put pressure on myself, and I thought this has to break the mould a little bit more each time. With Stereolab, I really enjoyed the process and was surprised at how good some of the stuff was. That was as a result of putting no pressure on yourself.

***SD!*:** You've been a "go to" string arranger for other artists for a number of years, having worked with everyone from Super Furry Animals to Paul Weller. Do you have to really like the material to agree to take on the gig, or is it purely a business transaction? And have you ever turned down any bands/artists? If so, who?
SOH: I've turned a few people down, usually because I just can't hear the strings. Recently, I was working with Jack from Bombay Bicycle Club, and I think he turned me down really. I played what I thought should happen while I was in the studio with him. But I thought he had strong ideas. I said, "Look, you're a very musical guy. This isn't that hard." He already knew what he wanted, so we didn't work together, which was for the very best reasons. I thought that he didn't need me.

Sometimes I'll hear something, and I'll say, I'm not mad about it, but it could be good. You can add strings and you can add to the harmony. You might say to the artist, "Look, if you drop that chord or just change that bass note there, I'll be able to do this and drop this beautiful change in, and I can make it sound like Wally Stott."

Paul Weller heard the first thing I did with The Coral, and when he came down he played me the songs. We spent three hours listening to records. 'By The Water' was obviously a sort of a Nick Drake thing. He understood I knew what to do. And then he gave me this very experimental thing. He'd been listening to Broadcast. I thought I could put a psych string thing on it where it wasn't really massively musical. He more or less said, "Add the music part to it." My favourite time working with Gruff was on his solo records *Candy Lion* and *Hotel Shampoo*. I think Gruff's really settled into a space in his life and music now.

***SD!*:** One of our favourite recent albums that you worked on is Susan James' *Sea Glass*. How did you come to work together and what do you think of the album?
SOH: I love the album. I'm really proud of that record. Susan was married to Fulton Dingley. Fulton produced *Cold And Bouncy* with us. And he did a couple of Stereolab records. Susan went back to California, and when she asked me to make an album, I told her that I wanted her to challenge herself and make a record that isn't country. I played her Nancy Priddy. She was really knocked out by her. She then sent me some excellent songs, and allowed me to cut in and make some changes, which allowed the strings in. I also played keys and bass. I think it's a really unusual record. It's not unlike what Jane Weaver was doing a few years ago. Susan is a great guitar player, a brilliant singer, and a great songwriter. And she's recording. She's got new stuff happening right now.

***SD!*:** You mentioned that The High Llamas' recent single 'Hey Panda' was influenced by a panda account you follow on TikTok. Looking back at your prolific history as a writer of songs, are there other instances of unexpected inspirations behind your compositions?
SOH: There're a couple. 'The Goat Looks On', for instance, from *Gideon Gaye*. I've lived in Peckham for 30 years, and I remember when Sainsbury's was being built on Dog Kennel Hill. There was a goat who lived on the hill. The whole event took eight/nine months, and the goat was there for the whole thing. So that's what 'The Goat Looks On' is about. 'Checking In, Checking Out' was inspired by a plane flight coming back from New York. As the New York Marathon had just been run, most of the people on the plane were Brits who'd been participating. That gave rise to the middle eight. In the '80s I used to go out with this woman who was in the British film industry, working in the art department. Everybody's got their eccentricities. The British film industry had a very particular way that people related to each other at that time. That's very much what 'Nomads' is about.

***SD!*:** Throughout your career you've seemed to have been obsessed with hunting down the "lost" chord and continually come up with complex arrangements which somehow hang together. Is that a fair assessment?
SOH: Without a doubt. Even in a song like Nina Simone's 'Young, Gifted And Black', which is basically about human rights, and a gospel song, there's just a little twist, a little turn in it that just brings it away from being straight-ahead gospel. It's either a lost chord or a lost key, one of the two. And I don't understand why more people don't do it more. You don't have to be a genius to find it. All you have to do is just search for five minutes longer, rather than just going to the first chord that comes into your head. There might be an alternative. Turn that major into a minor and see what happens. Change key, don't do whatever the obvious thing is. You can feel it in your stomach when the chord change happens. The right change does actually chemically change you. The chord change comes before the word, before the loud, the quiet, everything.

***SD!*:** *Hey Panda* is your 11th album, not counting a couple of solos. Where's your biggest market/audience these days?
SOH: Japan and America. In Europe, it's France and Norway. And people know about me in Brazil as well. Some younger people are coming now. I was at the Pearl & The Oysters show and there were kids coming up to me saying, "We're so excited about the new *Hey Panda* record." They're picking up on it through YouTube and things like that. There're a few guys in LA from the R&B community who are fans. They put it out and then it gets back to these kids through a different route. Mainly people are in their 50s and 60s. But it's great to see younger people.

***SD!*:** Any news on The High Llamas vinyl reissues?
SOH: The score is, it's happening. The reason why it didn't was because Universal owned it all, and they didn't know whether they owned it or not and couldn't find stuff. They literally took eight years. Drag City have licensed it now. We're going to start with *Gideon Gaye*, *Hawaii* and then *Cold And Bouncy,* and *Snow Bug*. We're going to end back to front in a weird way with a remix record, *Lollo Rosso,* and lastly *Santa Barbara*. That stuff is all with Drag City and they are cutting it and we're putting the artwork together right now.

***SD!*:** What's next for you? Another dabble in musical theatre perhaps?
SOH: I tried with *Rattling Trees,* and to be honest, it did fine. We played three one-week sessions in various places in Peckham and The West End. Paul Weller came, but the music theatre people didn't turn up. The Arts Council were just useless and basically said, "You can't do this because you're not a writer. You have to learn to be a writer before you can do it." I wrote all the dialogue and everything. I would love to do something like that again.

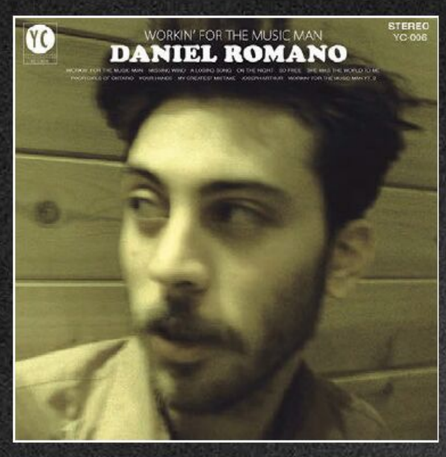
But what is the next thing? I'm working on something I can't tell you about.

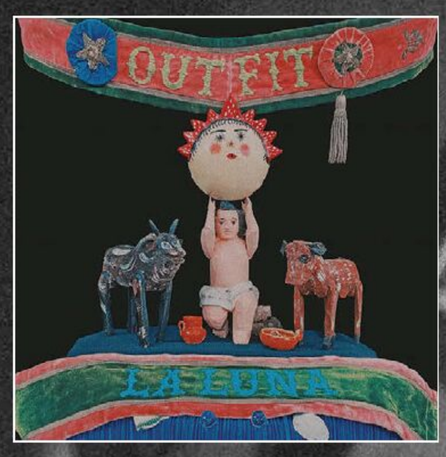
Something which is really, really, really interesting. Unbelievably interesting. I've got a big connection with Brazil. I'm hopefully going to Rio soon to make a very strange record. And I'm literally not allowed to tell you because I'll get told off. S!

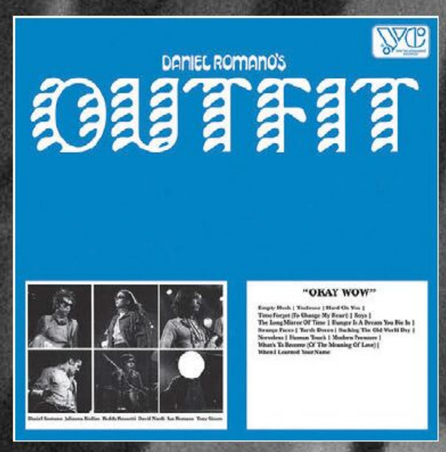
Hey Panda is out now on Drag City. The High Llamas vinyl reissues will follow

THE BOY WHO COULD

Across 15 years, 25 albums, hundreds of live shows and scores of mixed media endeavours, the chameleon-like DANIEL ROMANO has emerged as an unstoppable creative force, whose music straddles genres, confounds expectations and invites adulation.
Here, he and brother/right-hand man IAN talk ANDY MORTEN through their new album, work ethics, independence and why they're no longer workin' for the music man.
Portrait by Sebastian Buzzalino







Daniel and Ian Romano are sat on a sofa in Camera Varda, the Welland, Ontario recording studio-cum-"secret lair" that the pair built in 2020. Named after French poet Agnes Varda and decorated in muted mid-70s oranges, browns and blues, it's bookended by Lakes Ontario and Eerie and just 40km from the US border. Ian's long hair emerges from beneath a white beany hat onto a smiley face; Daniel sports yellow-lensed shades and a Camera Varda sweatshirt. "Can I get one of those?" I ask at one point. "Sorry, it's a one-off," he smiles. It's not the first time that phrase will be pressed into service during the next hour.

"All of this stuff stems from what we are born from." Ian (obscured) and Daniel Romano on stage in Spain, October 2017

We're here to discuss *Too Hot To Sleep*, the new album by Daniel Romano's Outfit, the band the brothers put together in 2019 – although so deep and wide is this writer's infatuation with Romano and his music that much of the interview feels like an episode of *This Is Your Life* with me as the host. *Too Hot To Sleep* comes after a comparative period of inactivity (in Romano years anyway) and 18 months since previous album *La Luna*. It's a very different record. Where *La Luna* is eloquent, grandiose and carefully constructed, *Too Hot To Sleep* is taught, spiky and instinctive. It's the *Live At Leeds* to *La Luna*'s *Tommy*.

"We were trying to capture the way people talked about us when they saw us playing live," begins Ian, who assumes the roles of co-producer and co-writer here. "The approach on this record was significantly different and that seems to be something that people are noticing right away, even with just one song." Indeed, anyone who's witnessed the Outfit's incendiary live shows during the last three years after perhaps only having heard a couple of Daniel's previous albums might have been left wondering if they were even watching the same artist at work.

Recorded sometime in 2022 ("I'd say it was at least a year and a half ago that it was actually tracked," suggests Ian) it's released six months after the departure of singer Juliana Riolino and bassist Roddy Rosetti. "Roddy and Juliana are on it," confirms Ian, "but it was predominantly cut by Daniel and myself in a room. We sat down and went deeper into it, looping into the live thing. 'What are we missing that could be really great live?' Moving into those tangents that we do live, incorporating that. It felt pretty close to being done, honestly, just live off the floor."

"It's basically how I do Ancient Shapes records," Daniel avers, "except usually I do that alone. This was the first time that Ski [Ian] and I had done it together. We came in for one day, maybe two, and smashed out the bedrock of the record. 'What's the vibe?,' then go, go go."

"In the past, Outfit things have been based predominantly around songs that were completely done and ready," Ian continues. "Maybe the structure would change by bringing in the band, but these were conceived without the song – we wrote it in the room." Daniel: "We walked in with a completely blank slate: no words, no concepts, nothing."

"The reality is that we were probably sitting on three albums at the time," offers Ian, tantalisingly so for those of us who've been wondering about the fruits of the absurdly prolific and hard-working Romanos. "There's been some shelving. The archive is rich!"

Daniel (born 1985) and Ian (who arrived three years later to the day) cut their teeth in Welland quartet Attack In Black, gleefully mixing hardcore punk with jangly indie-rock on a series of releases between 2004 and 2009. Upon splitting, Daniel and bassist Ian Kehoe struck up a friendship with Steven Lambke, guitarist with Toronto act Constantines. The trio established You've Changed Records with the express intention of being able to release their own music free of industry shackles. Among the label's first releases was *Daniel, Fred & Julie*, an album of largely traditional folk songs cut by Daniel and singer-songwriters Frederick Squire and Julie Doiron in Squire's garage. The EP *Songs For Misha* and Daniel's solo debut *Workin' For The Music Man* followed in 2010 and established Romano as a guitar-picking troubadour peddling a country sound he christened "mosey", the latter containing at least one future Romano staple in 'She Was The World To Me'.

> **"It was somewhere between a joke and a challenge. We're gonna do an album a week! A lot of people intentionally didn't release records during lockdown because they knew they couldn't tour them" IAN ROMANO**

Sleep Beneath The Willow and *Come Cry With Me* saw Romano's music embrace electric instrumentation, pedal steel and the full "nudie suit and Stetson" imagery of country music. Both albums were nominated for the Polaris Music Prize, roughly the Canadian equivalent of the UK's Mercury Music Prize. *11 Great Mosey Originals* and *If I've Only One Time Askin'* followed, the latter released on the well-established New West label and the first of Daniel's solo albums to feature brother Ian on drums and Kenneth Roy Meehan on recording duties.

Ian and Kenny have remained constant forces in Daniel's music since. "For whatever reason, *Come Cry With Me* was popular in Holland," Daniel explains. "We hit Kenny up and the first show was at Paradiso (large and storied Amsterdam concert venue). 'Oh! This is the room?' *(Laughs)* He's a technically and artfully minded person, which are the exact things you want in a sound engineer. He's always game." And brother Ian? "Well, I mean, come on," beams Daniel, gesturing towards his younger brother. "He's the greatest."

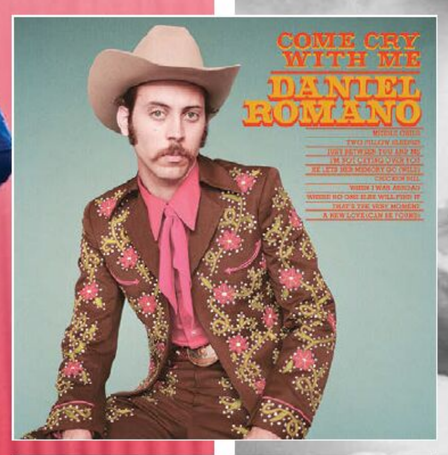
It was Romano's next New West album *Mosey* that saw him jettison some of the country trappings in favour of a tougher, band-orientated sound that recalls Dylan's mid-60s mutant R&B and Lee Hazlewood's desert-noir. 'Toulouse' and 'I'm Alone Now' regularly return to the live set. Daniel also began to employ elliptical, poetic lyrics and song titles ('Hunger Is A Dream You Die In', '(Gone Is) All But A Quarry Of Stone') that has remained in place throughout his subsequent work. If *Mosey* marked a distinct side-step then 2017's *Modern Pressure* truly put the cat among the pigeons. *Blonde On Blonde*-era electric Dylan remains a touchstone, but there are bright indie-pop moves and diversions into sitar-flecked psychedelia. All the time, Romano's songwriting chops are stretched, his guitar playing is allowed free rein, his vocal harmonies densely multi-tracked, strings and Hammond flourishes added with abandon. He sings and plays every note.

Evidence of Romano's soon to become legendary prolificity is glimpsed on *Nerveless* and *Human Touch*, two more entirely self-made albums released simultaneously on Bandcamp in January 2018 and deleted immediately once that month's Canadian tour was over. While *Nerveless* offers further succinct guitar-pop tunes including future stage favourite 'Anyone's Arms', *Human Touch* is something of a return to the swampy folk of *Daniel, Fred & Julie*. Both titles are intended to be Volumes 1 and 2 of the ongoing Archives series of vinyl editions but have yet to emerge.

Romano saw out 2018 with *Finally Free*, a defiantly stripped-back and often low-key affair that recalls The Incredible String Band's modal exoticism as much as it does Leonard Cohen's dour confessionals and features instrumental support from regular collaborator Kay Berkel. Raw, emotional and cathartic, Daniel cites it as his favourite of his own albums. "In terms of channelling things, *Finally Free* was intense. I wrote all the words to that record in a car in two hours. I feel like I'm still learning from that record. I don't listen to it but when we play songs from it, it feels like it's not just *my* thoughts. It was given to me. I mean, everything is to an extent but with this one I thought, What is this?'" Daniel punctures the gravity with a smirking "I like all of them, probably."

A comparatively quiet patch followed in 2019, during which Romano made the third Ancient Shapes album *A Flower That Wouldn't Bloom*. Did we not mention Ancient Shapes? Envisaged as an outlet for

Daniel in 2013 (above and below)
PHOTOS BY VANESSA HEINZ AND COLIN MEDLEY



2013-2018 albums; Daniel takes off, Ian stays grounded, tournée infinite, October 2017 (top); Kenneth Roy Meehan and Daniel on the Spanish leg of the tour (above); somewhere on the road in Europe
PHOTOS BY SEBASTIAN BUZZALINO

music that honours his beloved DC hardcore punk (with a distinctly Ramones-y flavour), Romano made *Ancient Shapes* and *Silent Rave* in 2016 and 2017 and put together a touring band comprising David Nardi, Roddy Rosetti (more on them soon), Vee Bell and brother Ian (by now a mainstay of countless Toronto punk combos and off-shoots) to take these short, sharp missives out on the road. Twenty songs, 25 minutes. Bang.

Your writer is somewhat sheepish to admit that, despite *Mosey* and *Modern Pressure* having been recommended by music friends of redoubtable taste, it wasn't until 2020 that I fell for Romano's music. And boy, did I fall hard. The fact that he put his name to nine albums that year didn't hurt.

I missed *Visions Of The Higher Dream*, another 10-track set that dropped on Bandcamp in March. Recorded during the first days of COVID quarantine, it takes the cornerstones of previous albums and presents them in a more widescreen, genre-busting form – the songwriting is concise and direct, the settings edge towards a powerpop aesthetic, and there are layers of keyboard ornamentation (Mellotron, harpsichord) and real-life guest performers whose violin, sax, flute and pedal steel parts are vital to the overall sound. *Visions* vividly points the way forward to the first Outfit record, which appeared the same month.

In 2017, the Romanos had co-opted David Nardi and Roddy Rosetti from the Ancient Shapes band for a series of live shows, including many across Europe and the UK, christened the *tournée infinite*. With the addition of Welland singer-songwriter Juliana Riolino in 2019, the Outfit was born. The first fruits of this collaboration were captured "live in Scandinavia" in August for "*Okay Wow*", on which the Outfit revisit 15 cuts from Daniel's expanding catalogue and present them afresh in a fully electrified (and electrifying) setting. And this time you could buy the record. Barely a month later came *Super Pollen*, a six-tracker featuring Daniel and Ian alongside their pals Jonah Falco and Mike Haliechuk of Toronto hardcore act Fucked Up. A more restrained, refined set than might be expected, it's a close cousin to Ancient Shapes' work. Five days later came the digital-only *Content To Point The Way*, a full-blown return to Daniel's "mosey" period, recorded with the Outfit and auxiliary players. Retrospectively claiming he was "kinda pushed into making that one", one listen to opener 'If Words Can't Express It' banishes all notions of this being an unnecessary throwback.

A week later we were presented with *Forever Love's Fool*, a shape-shifting, multi-part 22-minute song/single/album cut by the Outfit with drummer Danny Carey of prog-metal legends Tool. "Sonically, I think that's the best record we've made," Ian gushes with puppy-dog enthusiasm. "Something happened on that one and I really doubt we'll ever be able to do it again." Daniel nods in agreement. "Of course, I'm really excited about *Too Hot To Sleep*. It's something we haven't done before and to have me and Dan working together on it is really cool. I think people are gonna be as psyched as I am."

Two weeks later (come on, keep up!) came *Spider Bite*, more hardcore punk thrills made by Daniel, Ian and Steven Lambke. Then there was *Do (What Could Have Been) "Infidels" By Bob Dylan & The Plugz* i.e. the Outfit imagining what the whole of Sir Bob's '83 album might've sounded like if he'd actually recorded it with LA punk-pop band The Plugz, with whom he made one bizarre *Letterman* appearance. And rounding out May's quartet of releases was *Dandelion*, for this writer the most consummate solo Daniel outing so far – possibly ever. Offering gently psychedelic, ultra-melodic powerpop pearls informed by '68-vintage Beatles, Kinks and Zombies, it's the perfect entry point for anyone who's still reading this without knowing what's going on. "1968 was the *greatest* year for music!" Daniel exclaims at this point. "Those two perfect Incredible String Band records, oh man."

> **"I guess that's just the kind of music I like. It's my reference point for what good music is. The reason I can't make contemporary pop music is that I don't listen to it"**
> **DANIEL ROMANO**

Daniel's tendency to do "a folk record" after some noisy ones resulted in July's *A Splendour Of Heart*, made with David Nardi and singer-songwriter Kelly Sloan and credited to Alias Ensemble. Wearing its love affair with the String Band proudly on its sleeve, it's a Celtic-tinged re-imagining of traditional and original songs.

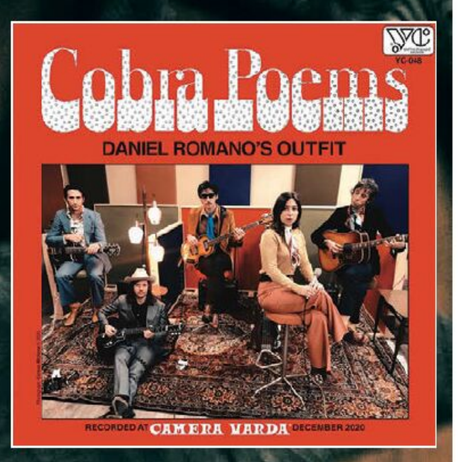
September's *How Ill Thy World Is Ordered* may be considered the Outfit's first collective artistic statement proper. All five members are on blistering form on a set of songs that remains one of the most cohesive in the Romano catalogue, especially when you understand the work ethic employed. Daniel distributed demos, there was minimal rehearsal and when the tape start rolling, the band – recording live from the floor – had a maximum of three takes to nail each song. No excuses. That performances as symbiotic as these emerged is little short of miraculous, while the songs show growing maturity and confidence from a writer with no shortage of either. Inter-song segues and tape manipulation glue the whole thing together. Among echoes of prime '70s Bowie and Who, Daniel frequently sounds like Dark Horse-era George Harrison. There are no holes. While you were waiting for your vinyl/t-shirt bundle to arrive in the post, up popped *White Flag*, another seamless Bandcamp-only solo set that injects *Dandelion*'s pastoral pleasures with folk and prog textures. Oh, and a book of love poems.

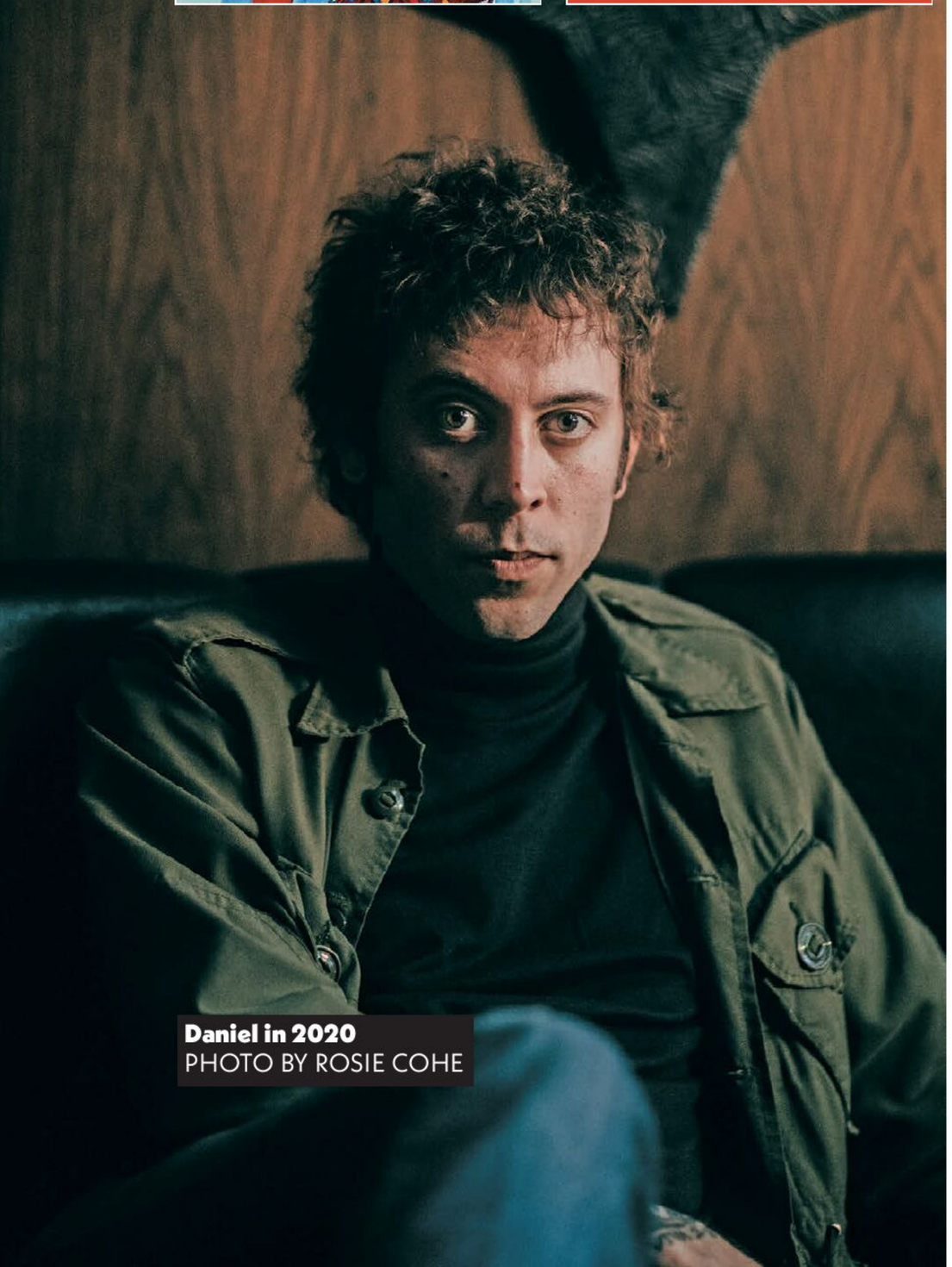
"I was separated from my partner because of the border closures, and I just had to fill my time with something," Daniel chuckles, still somewhat removed from the fact that he achieved all of this. "It was survival – not actually, but mentally." "It was somewhere between a joke and a challenge," Ian interjects. "We're gonna do an album a week! We did that record with Danny [Carey] and he was making the point of how important it was to have these things come out. A lot of people intentionally didn't release records because they knew they couldn't tour them. Meanwhile, we're like, 'Sign me up!'"

A prolific year then. Clearly, Daniel is a man who wakes up in the morning and *has* to work. As a self-styled multi-disciplinary artist, he's supervised, directed and even filmed numerous promo videos, is responsible for designing and often painting or photographing album artwork (as well as titles by Canadian folk-rock duo Kacy & Clayton and label-mates/collaborators Julie Doiron and Juliana Riolino), and designing and manufacturing the Outfit's t-shirts and merch. As a skilled leather craftsman, he's designed and made custom guitar straps (his friend Travis Good of The Sadies can usually be seen sporting one). It's this relentless workflow and restless creative urge that sets Romano apart from even the most productive, prolific independent musicians working today. We mention a few: Guided By Voices and Oh Sees operate their own labels; Ty Segall favours an established indie.

"I think maybe when Daniel has worked with other labels," offers Steven Lambke, Daniel's partner at You've Changed, "he's been met with obstacles and pushback about release schedules and genre consistency because it was hard to fit all this music into standard practices. I really don't care about standard practices; I care about pursuing artistic visions. I try

***Modern Pressure* promo**
PHOTO BY SEBASTIAN BUZZALINO;
2020-21 albums





Daniel in 2020
PHOTO BY ROSIE COHE

The Outfit in 2020. L-R: Daniel, Ian, David Nardi, Juliana Riolino, Roddy Rosetti; Carson McHone (second left) joins, 2022 (below)

Daniel and Carson, 2013 (left) PHOTO BY COLIN MEDLEY; **The Outfit, 2024 model. L-R: Tommy Major, Daniel, Carson, Ian, Kenny Meehan**

to say yes to artist's ideas." "We were so young in our old band," Daniel explains. "We were being told what to do. We thought that was insane. The next step was that we had to take control of that… because we're not on the same page as anyone, it seems. Also, all of this stuff stems from what we are born from. Nothing that we're doing is any different from DC hardcore."

With COVID lockdowns slowly being lifted, 2021 began true-to-form with Daniel's solo Bandcamp album *Kissing The Foe* in March, another immersive and nuanced set that forms something of a trilogy with *Dandelion* and *White Flag* and contains some of Daniel's most affecting and beautiful songs to date. 'Walking Around Holding Hands' – a sweet, teenage ode to "not wanting to do too much at all" (oh, the irony) recorded on what sounds like a phone – marks his first credited collaboration with Carson McHone, the Austin singer-songwriter with whom Daniel had begun a personal and professional partnership. The same month, the Outfit presented two live stream concerts and recorded two songs at Camera Varda for *Shindig!*'s own online festival, while Daniel released two 20-plus-minute pieces of ambient instrumental music as Varianza. Live album *Fully Plugged In* followed in June, a selection of old and new material (recorded immediately before lockdown) that confirmed the Outfit as one of the hottest live acts on the planet. It contains a reading of The Kinks' 'God's Children' that, for some of us at least, elevated proceedings to the near-divine.

"I guess that's just the kind of music I like," Daniel confesses. "It's my reference point for what good music is. Sometimes people ask me, how do you capture the elements of that music, of that time? But if you listen almost exclusively to music of that era, then it would be harder to do something modern. The reason I can't make contemporary pop music is that I don't listen to it. And despite the fact that a lot of music from that time is vague and unsorted when it comes to lyrical ideas – and I don't feel vague and unsorted with *my* lyrical ideas – but I'd rather have that than the on-the-nose, manipulative 'emotions for propaganda's sake' kind of modern pop." He warms to the theme. "I listened to the radio yesterday – regular radio – and I thought, this is crazy. Emotional brainwashing. How is this any different to a commercial for pain reliever?"

Cobra Poems, the first album to be recorded entirely in Camera Varda, arrived in October, the cover depicting the five members sporting their dandiest polyester finery. It's a looser record than *How Ill…*, imbued with the swagger of the Stones and Faces and a collaborative spirit largely borne out of Daniel deliberately presenting "skeletons" of songs to the Outfit, rather than full demos. It boasts future classic 'The Motions', one of two lead vocals taken by Riolino, while the supporting cast includes third Romano brother David, Carson McHone and singer-songwriter Mark Lalama.

The Outfit recruited McHone and hit the road hard, touring *Cobra Poems* across Canada and the US, picking up accolades from all who witnessed their energetic stage show, which by now contained almost no pauses or breaks for air, songs segueing into each other by the four or five. They rounded out 2022's delayed Europe/UK dates with a jaw-dropping show in London before Dan returned to Toronto (by boat – he doesn't fly) and the group scattered, David Nardi never to return.

If the gapless live shows and conceptual nature of much of Daniel's art were to find a logical meeting place, it would be on *La Luna*, released in September. A rock opera? A song suite? A single 33-minute piece? Yes, that ought to cover it. Recorded in one run-through but unlikely ever to be played live, it appeared to mark a fork in the road. "*La Luna* was a weird, interesting project," Daniel says, adding quizzically, "but let's think about what we actually do for a living here!" At which point we're back where we came in: brothers playing rock 'n' roll in a room together, swopping instruments, cutting entire albums in two days, trying to bottle lightning, feeding on the energy.

We natter about equipment: Daniel's fondness for Japanese Greco Rickenbackers. "I've got three of them now!" he says proudly, just four days before one goes on sale on his Instagram. He tells us he gifted Ian "a nice '70s pearl kit" for his birthday, to which Ian responds, in true semi-goofy rock drummer style, "I just like loud ones."

In some ways nothing's changed since the 16- and 19-year-olds clambered on stage as Attack In Black 20 years ago. Or when Daniel donned his five-gallon hat and decided to quit workin' for the music man. "Some people are still putting up with us," reflects Ian, "some have moved on with us and really enjoy it, and some of them are just very spiteful. Here, have it all. You win." S!

With thanks to Steven Lambke, and Daniel and Ian Romano

Too Hot To Sleep is out now on You've Changed

WHERE DO I START?
A Neophyte's Guide

Daniel himself favours 2018's self-explanatory *Finally Free* as his own favourite, while Ian plumps for 2020's *Forever Love's Fool* – you could hardly find two more different records in the Romano canon. Helpful? No.

This writer favours Daniel's 2020/21 forays into florid, pastoral psychedelia – *Dandelion, White Flag* and *Kissing The Foe* – and the full-bodied Outfit records that have become the live band's stock-in-trade. Start with *How Ill Thy World Is Ordered* and the two live albums *"Okay Wow"* and *Fully Plugged In. La Luna* may prove slightly befuddling to new listeners.

Daniel's "mosey" period may be best represented by *Come Cry With Me* and *If I've Only One Time Askin'*, although the revionist *Content To Point The Way* is more polished and may prove more accessible to country-rock fans.

The solo "coming out" records *Mosey* and *Modern Pressure* are eminently listenable – the former still has its roots in country, while *Modern Pressure* is more akin to the kind of 1967 psychedelic folk-rock one-shots we're so fond of here at *Shindig!*

We'll leave you to unpick the punk, prog, folk and ambient stuff for yourselves!

Andy Morten

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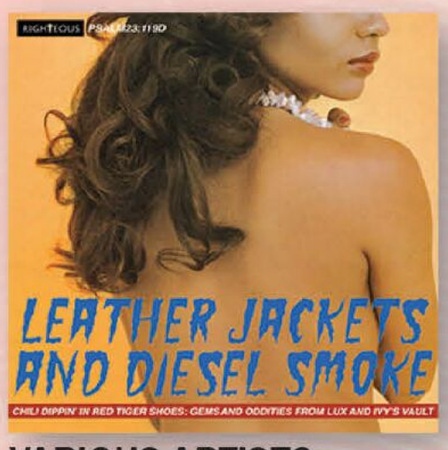

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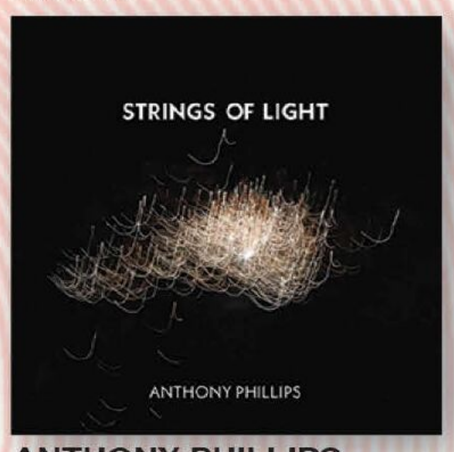

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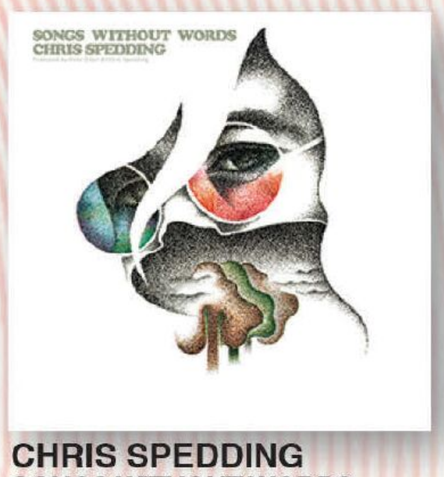

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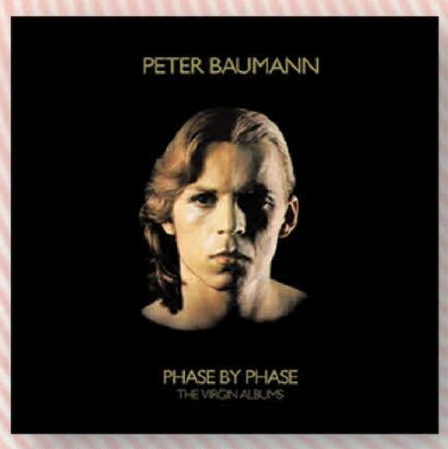

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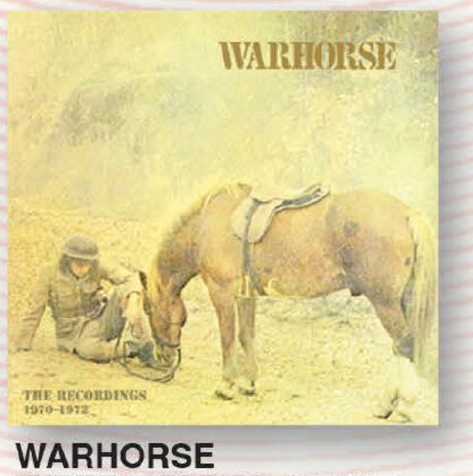

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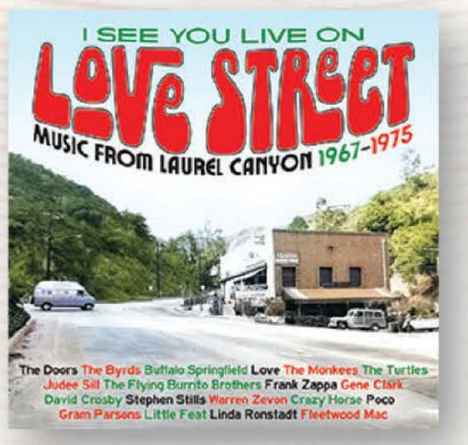

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SEARCHIN' F

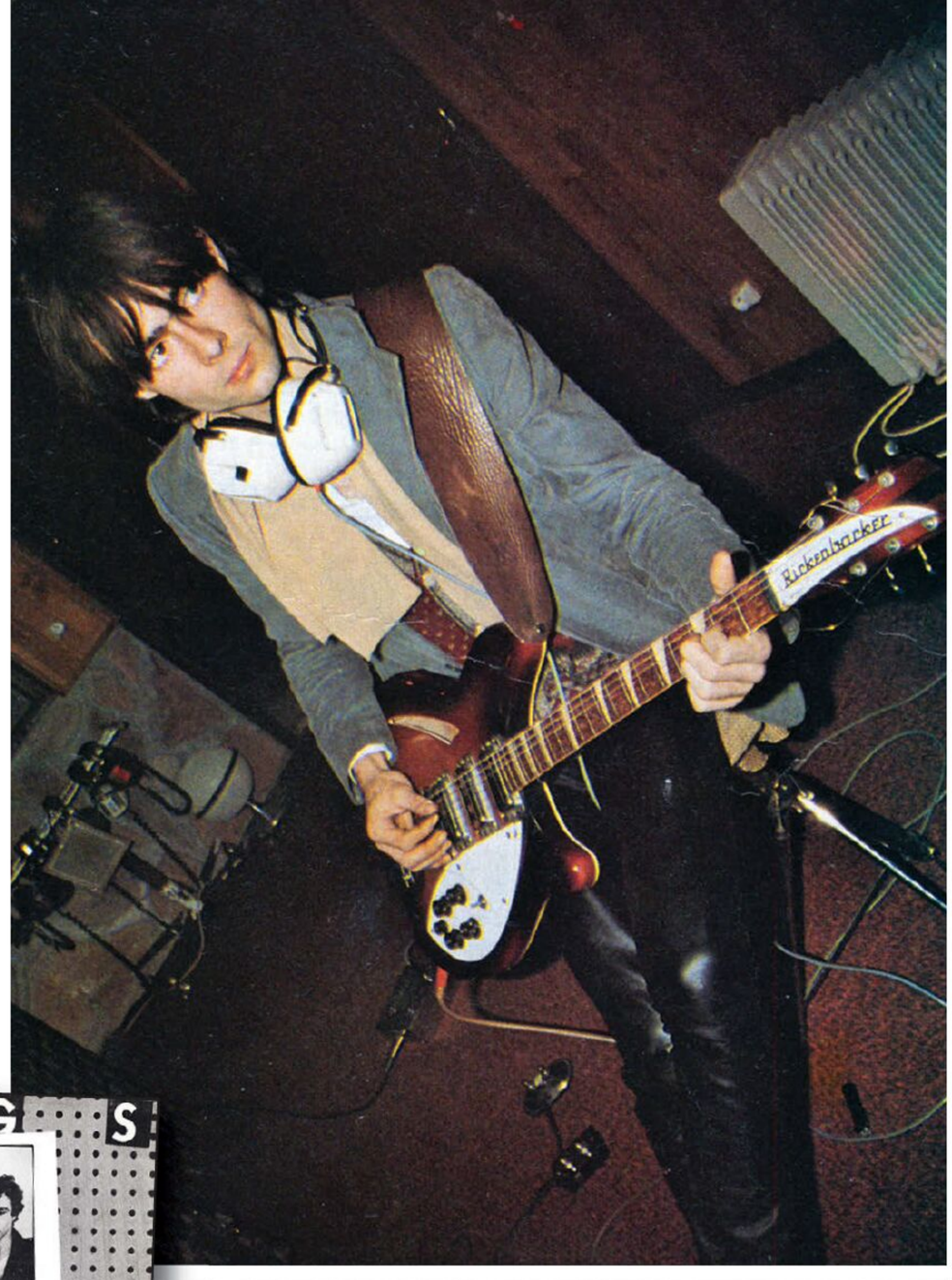
From the streets of Rouen to an abrupt end in New England. Cult French band DOGS are known by the relative few but adored by all who've enjoyed their high-octane blasts of melodic energy and jangling guitars.

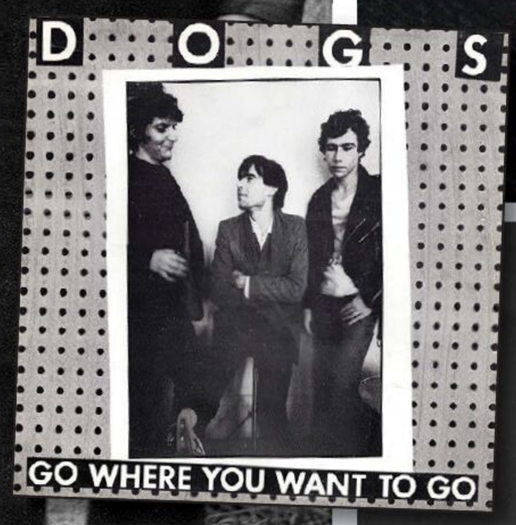
One such obsessive is PHIL SUGGITT, who looks back across a lengthy and singular career

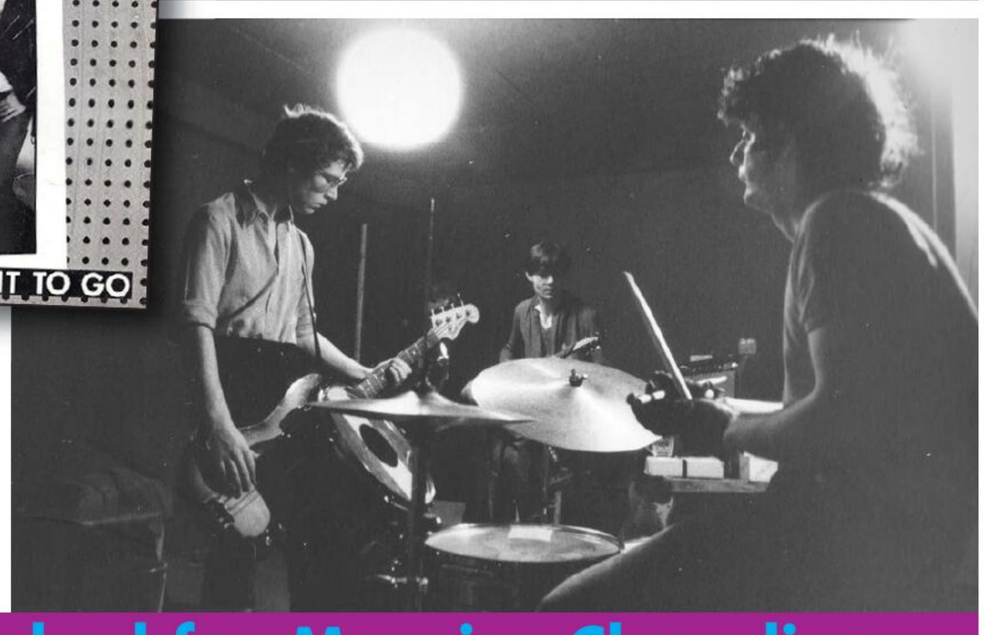
E OR SHAKES

Dogs in 1978. Their bark is much worse than their bite. L-R: Dominique Laboubée, Antoine Masy-Perier, Michel Gross, Hugues Urvoy de Portzamparc

Sometimes a story can begin at the end. It is Autumn 2002 and French band (The) Dogs have the chance of a US tour, involving a half dozen or so dates in modest venues supporting the relatively obscure Rick Blaze & The Ballbusters. Dominique Laboubée, Dogs singer, songwriter and lead guitarist, has pneumonia and is probably aware that he also has lung cancer. Nevertheless, he is keen to do the tour, as his band has toured all over Europe, but never previously visited America despite playing in one form or another since 1973.







Hugues, Dominique and Michel, the original three-man Dogs; Dominique channels his inner Paul Weller; 1978 EP *Go Where You Want To Go*; early rehearsal

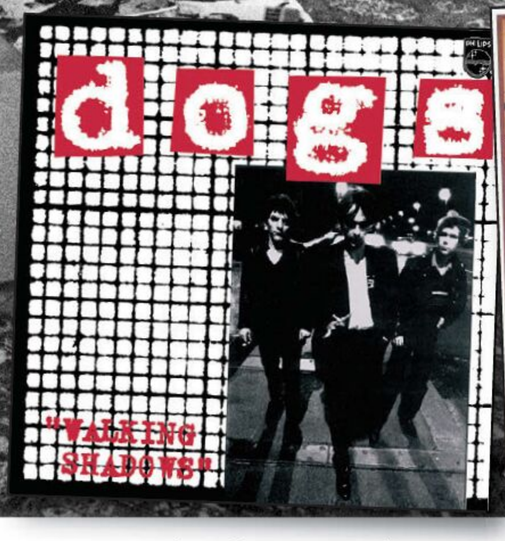
"Singing in English worked for Maurice Chevalier – I don't see why it shouldn't work for us!"

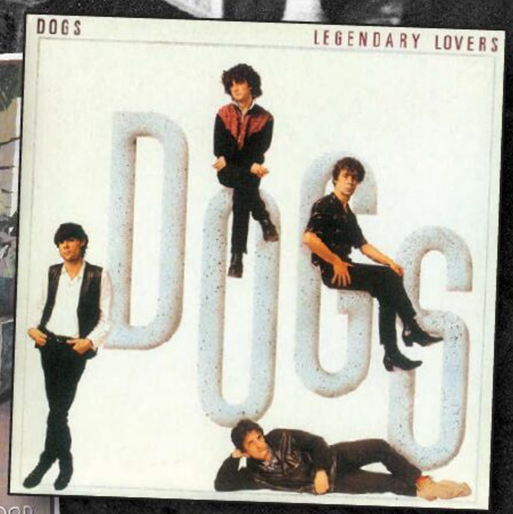
Dominique knows the trip is a big risk and contrary to medical advice, but he goes anyway. It isn't clear if he knows precisely how ill he is, but it's clear that there's nowhere else he would be rather than on stage. The first gig is in Worcester, Massachusetts. He sings 'If You Don't Want Me No More' from Dogs' '83 album *Legendary Lovers*, but is unable to get through another song, and has to leave the stage. He is taken directly to hospital and dies there, on 9th October. He is 45.

Dial back to 1971. Born in '57, 14-year-old Dominique emerged from the French provincial rock scene of the '70s. He began by listening to his sister's record collection: The Beatles, Stones, Kinks, Who – all the usual suspects. A school friend turned him on to The Velvet Underground. At that time many in the UK and USA laboured under the misconception that Europe in general, (and France in particular) was something of a rock and roll desert, and that there was no significant rock 'n' roll culture. It was thought that the French didn't "get" rock 'n' roll. In fact, the truth has always been that only a small number of French "got" it, but those that did *really* got it! Seventies France had little radio, TV or live music of note, but there were "very small but rabid" groups of fans in many provincial towns, often inspired by independent record stores that shared a love of The Stooges, Dolls, Heartbreakers, Groovies, Ramones and the English bands such as Dr Feelgood and Ducks Deluxe. Despite the low profile of guitar-based rock 'n' roll in France, there were several good magazines, such as *Rock & Folk*, which championed high energy music from the US and UK. Growing up in the town of Rouen in central Normandy, the teenage Laboubée was inspired by the writings of journalists like Philippe Manoeuvre to check out the bands above, and to form a band with high school friends, mixing covers with originals from the outset. The first Dogs gig was at a casino in St Valery en Caux in '73. Originally the band was known as "Dogs", and on all their subsequent records there isn't a "The" to be found. The name derives from The Flamin' Groovies briefly changing their name to Dogs for a few months in '71, but the "The" wouldn't go away; they were introduced as Les Dogs on French TV, and were usually called The Dogs by fans and friends. They never considered "Chiens"; most aspiring French (and indeed European) rock musicians tried their hardest to write and sing in English, believing it was necessary for conveying the spirit of rock 'n' roll. Despite Dominique's prolific output over 25 years, hardly any of his songs were in French. Singing in English also made sense as Dogs built up a following outside France, in the rest of Europe. Guitarist Antoine quipped to *Bucketful Of Brains* in '86 that singing in English "…worked for Maurice Chevalier – I don't see why it shouldn't work for us!"

Dogs' early mentor was Lionel Herrmani, who ran Mel's Massacre, a small record store in Rouen. (The unusual name originates from its position on the Rue Massacre, originally Rue Boucheries Massacre, where medieval butchers killed their animals because there were no slaughterhouses nearby!) Herrmani imported all the best guitar music of the day and managed the band from '77-81. He fostered their earliest recordings, which were made on basic 4-track

Masy-Perier (left) joins for 1982's *Too Much Class For The Neighbourhood*; albums one to four





equipment in his basement. The original plan was to record a song to advertise Lionel's shop, but the plan soon changed when it became clear Dogs tunes were a lot more promising. The first 45 pressing quickly sold 3,500 copies; it was the first French independent punk/pop single.

"I first heard Dogs on the Beggars Banquet *Streets* punk compilation in the summer of '77," remembers Robin Wills of The Barracudas. (They were the sole French band on the LP because Herrmani knew the Beggars Banquet staff.) "The Dogs had just one song, '19', which just blew me away; it had that really cutting, lo-fi sound, like The Flamin' Groovies' *Grease* EP. If anything, it took that sound even further – it was even more trebly. The drumming was really powerful, and it was also a great tune." Thanks to Herrmani Laboubée and his band became fans of the UK punk emerging in the summer of '77, but their sound was closer to earlier US punk and English pub-rock. (Dominique became friendly with Little Bob Story, the lone French presence on the English scene.) After their debut single, 'Charlie Was A Good Boy,' the *Go Where You Want To Go* EP was also released on the Melodies Massacre label. It was more professional and "produced", losing a little of the visceral energy of '19', but gaining in improved proto-powerpop songwriting. Robin Wills reveals that the descending riff in Dominique's song 'My Life' inspired him to write Barracudas favourite 'Grammar Of Misery'.

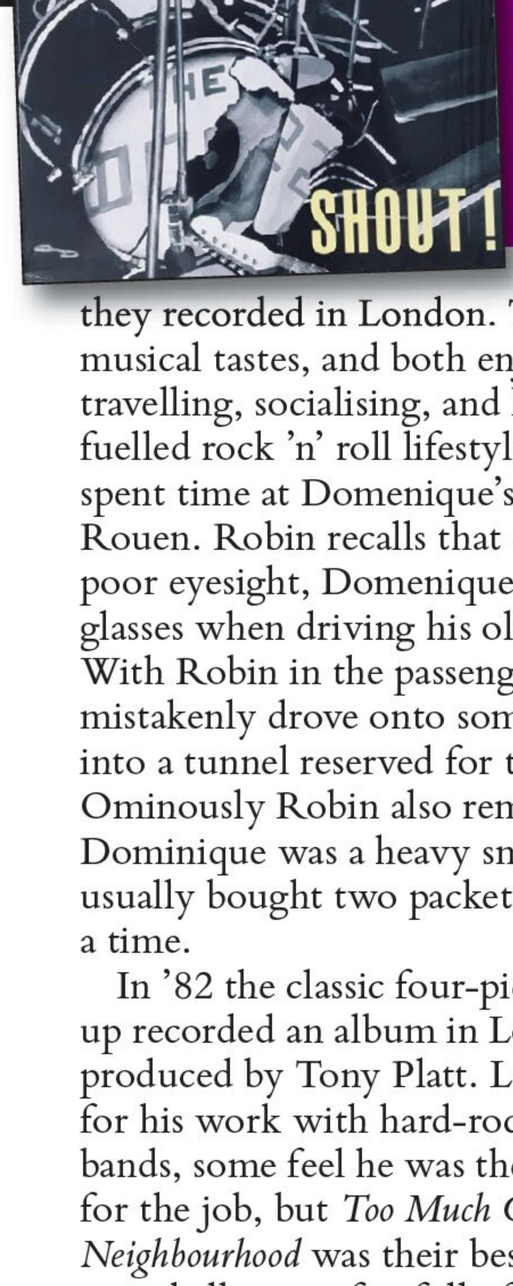
Dogs were signed to Phonogram in France, and, like many young musicians before them, splashed out on some decent equipment. Their first album, *Different,* wasn't actually very different from their first releases. What separated the French trio from dozens of now-forgotten punk and new-wave bands of the time was the punchy, melodic songwriting of Laboubée. Fans of the band tend to fall into two camps, favouring either the melodic, hook-laden sound or the sound of the second album, which has been described as "Billy Idol's Generation X on downers". Dominique felt that *Different* represented the "pop side" of Dogs, whilst the second LP, '80's *Walking Shadows*, represented the "dark side", with a harder, harsher and moodier sound, replacing the Rickenbacker with a Gibson. The album sold quite well by French standards, and led to successful dates all over France, as well as national TV appearances.

At this point Dogs was a trio. The rhythm section comprised Dominique's long-time friend and collaborator Michel 'Mimi' Gross on drums and bassist Hugues Urvoy de Portzamparc. At the outset Hugues could only play two songs, but he was a quick learner. Gradually a fourth member joined; Antoine Masy-Perier had been a fan of the band from the outset and began to join the band on stage for a few numbers. As his playing and repertoire extended, he joined the band permanently on second guitar and vocals. This line-up stayed together until the end of the decade and created the classic albums for which Dogs are best remembered.

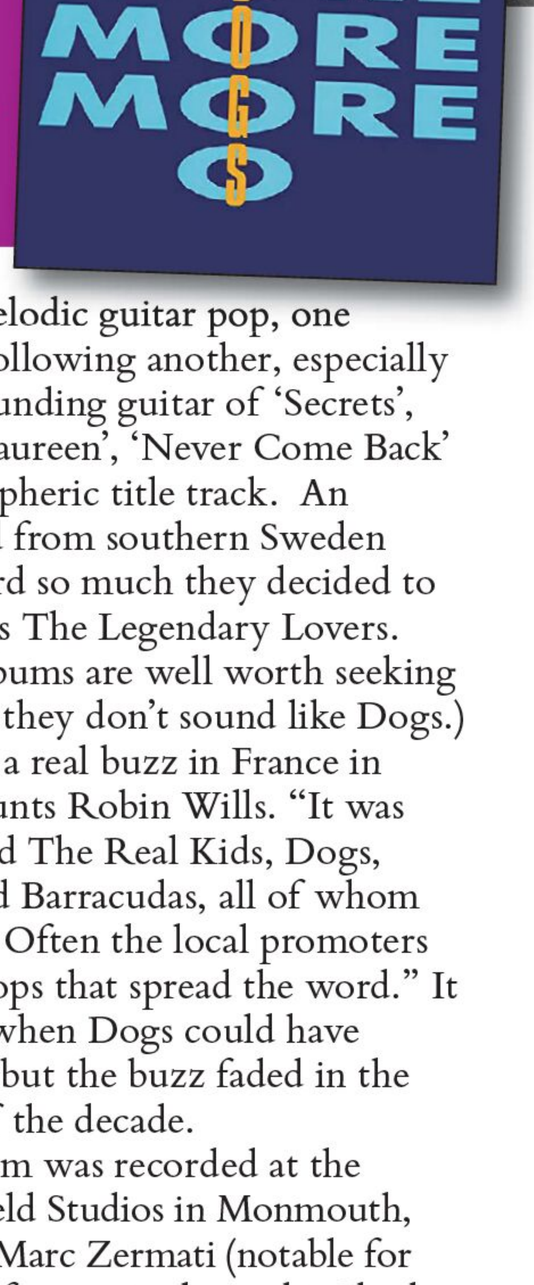
Despite the good critical reception to the first two albums, Phonogram dropped Dogs in '81, but they were soon signed by the French division of CBS/Epic. It seemed as if *Walking Shadows* had firmly nailed the band to the punk-rock mast, but (fortunately) Laboubée had other ideas. He often said that he liked songs to be short, tough, and dynamic, but also melodic; his ability with a tune took Dogs far beyond most of the first wave punks, most of whom had energy but precious few tunes. Laboubée was also aware that a fresh wave of guitar pop was emerging in the early '80s, drawing on the garage sounds and pop sensibilities of the '60s, psychedelia and the energy of '70s punk, represented in France by labels like New Rose, Closer and Lolita, many of which had sprung from a host of excellent independent record stores. Dogs fitted well into the small but emerging European scene.

Robin Wills first met Dominique in person in '82, at gigs in Paris and Rouen. The pair quickly became close friends. The Barracudas toured frequently in France and Dominique would join them on stage for a few numbers. Similarly, Robin would hang out with Dogs when

Outside the Melodies Massacre shop with owner and mentor Lionel Herrmani; albums five and six



"Dogs had that really cutting, lo-fi sound, like The Flamin' Groovies' *Grease* EPs. If anything, it took that sound even further – it was even more trebly" Robin Wills, The Barracudas



they recorded in London. They shared musical tastes, and both enjoyed travelling, socialising, and living a drug-fuelled rock 'n' roll lifestyle. They often spent time at Domenique's house in Rouen. Robin recalls that despite having poor eyesight, Domenique wore dark glasses when driving his old Mercedes. With Robin in the passenger seat, he once mistakenly drove onto some tramlines and into a tunnel reserved for trains! Ominously Robin also remembers that Dominique was a heavy smoker who usually bought two packets of cigarettes at a time.

In '82 the classic four-piece Dogs line-up recorded an album in London, produced by Tony Platt. Largely known for his work with hard-rock and metal bands, some feel he was the wrong man for the job, but *Too Much Class For The Neighbourhood* was their best and most varied album so far, full of strong and stylish Laboubée songs, There was a brighter, poppier sound evident on such tunes as the driving title track and the chiming 12-string of 'Home Is Where You Want To Be.' Mimi's drums propel the opener, 'Shakin With Linda' a take on the Isleys' '62 hit 'Twistin' With Linda'. The title tune is another powerful stand-out. The album sold over 25,000, a more than respectable figure for the French market.

Dogs toured extensively around Europe, gathering a significant following outside France in Scandinavia, Belgium and Switzerland. They also supported Dr Feelgood on a 15 date UK tour, but they weren't particularly well received.

Legendary Lovers ('83) was again recorded in England, with the highly regarded Vic Maile in the producer's chair. Maile already had a CV that included Dr Feelgood, Eddie & The Hot Rods and The Inmates. Vic did a sterling job, although Robin asserts that the demo he heard on cassette was even better. Jeremy Thompson of Reminder records, (who recently rereleased Dogs Melodies Massacre recordings) hopes to unearth the tapes and release them. The record begins with the impossibly catchy and infectious 'Little Johnny Jet', with superb percussion from Mimi, who is on top of his game throughout. The album is full of joyous, good time, melodic guitar pop, one snappy tune following another, especially the eastern sounding guitar of 'Secrets', the jaunty 'Maureen', 'Never Come Back' and the atmospheric title track. An excellent band from southern Sweden liked the record so much they decided to call themselves The Legendary Lovers. (Both their albums are well worth seeking out, although they don't sound like Dogs.)

"There was a real buzz in France in '82/83," recounts Robin Wills. "It was centred around The Real Kids, Dogs, Fleshtones and Barracudas, all of whom were touring. Often the local promoters had record shops that spread the word." It was the time when Dogs could have "made it big" but the buzz faded in the second half of the decade.

A third album was recorded at the iconic Rockfield Studios in Monmouth, Wales. In '84 Marc Zermati (notable for issuing a run of great singles on his Skydog label) had become their manager. Due to changes at the top, Sony/Epic France were not keen on the idea of a live record and dithered over whether to invest a substantial sum in another Dogs album.

Zermati negotiated the funds normally allotted to a single, but successfully pitched the idea of a live in the studio recording, which could be done for the same cost. To keep costs down Zermati produced the album with the band. The resultant *Shout!* album was a mixed bag. There are some solid covers like the excellent Nerves tune 'One Way Ticket' and The Easybeats' 'When I Was Young', although the originals were not as strong as on the previous two albums. The album begins with Robin Wills announcing the band as if he was welcoming them on stage, followed by the energetic, frenetic 'Pah-Pah-Ooh-Pah-Ooh'. The applause that follows gives the false impression that you're listening to a live album, but it was borrowed from a Graham Parker gig at The Rainbow. It is hard to disagree with reviewers who saw it as a breathing space, a stop-gap.

The fourth Epic release, *More More More*, divides fans. Dominique was worried that Dogs were repeating themselves on record. During the recording in '86 he told *Bucketfull Of Brains'* Herb Denning, "Up til now we were really controlling the direction of our product while working with Vic Maile and Tony Platt." New producers Bob Andrews (keyboard player with Brinsley Schwarz and The Rumour) and Colin Fairley (sound engineer for Elvis Costello and Nick Lowe) did a lot more arranging. "They've changed the songs without losing our identity. They are more interested in the songs themselves, chose the ones they really liked. We put it all into their hands."

The producers didn't listen to Dogs' earlier work to avoid preconceptions. Critics were divided. Some long-time fans were unimpressed by aspects of the sound, especially the Linn drums. They were surprised to hear prominent saxophone and brass on some of the songs, like the opener 'Waiting For A Miracle', or assured backing vocals from the likes of veteran soul man Jimmy Helms, and was that an accordion on the title track? Listening decades later, it's clear that Andrews knew a good song when he heard one. The album contains some of Dominique's most commercial and melodic songs, with choruses that just won't go away, such as 'Back Of My Mind' and 'I Just Can't Fall In Love'. There are many highlights, like the guitars on the ballad 'Jungle Of Love'. Despite the quality of the songs, the album didn't achieve its objectives. Laboubée was hoping to attract a whole new audience without losing any of Dogs loyal following, but it wasn't to be. New fans didn't arrive in droves, and some old fans lost interest.

A Million Ways Of Killing Time ('88) was recorded in Paris for New Rose, and is another fine record, recorded after Hugues had left. Christian Rosset from Normandy band Tupelo Soul came in on bass, and Dogs became a five piece with the addition of Francois Godefroy, aka Gene Clarksville, on keyboards. The record is especially notable for the quality of Dominique's guitar playing; memorable and incisive breaks and riffs abound, such as 'Last Summer' and the brooding ballad 'Searchin' For Shakes'. Wreckless Eric's 'Whole Wide World' has been covered many times, but Dogs' version is one of the best.

The late '80s and early '90s were relatively quiet for Dogs. There were no new records, few gigs and little news. Mimi left in '89, having been Dominique's close friend and drummer for 16 years. In '92 Antoine left to devote all his time to the band Tony Truand, leaving Laboubée to recruit a new group. Dominique sometimes collaborated with other French artists, but it didn't sound like Dogs. The following year saw the release of a disappointing album on Skydog, *Three Is A Crowd*. The Dogs were back to a trio, adding Bruno Lefaivre on drums. Colin Fairley produced again, but the tone was dramatically different to *More More More*. The material was mostly dark, "downer" rock. The dark lyrics suggested all was not well with Dominique. Every Dog has its day, and this fan thought Dominique's day had gone.

Things began to look up after '96, when long-time fan Laurent Ciron joined on guitar and vocals. Dogs started to play more gigs around France, and went back into the studio again, releasing two CDs on Hacienda records, *Four Of A Kind Volumes 1 & 2*. *Volume 1* had a short running time of about 35 minutes, with an extra French language CD single, 'Jenny Jane'. *Volume 2*, *A Different Kind*, also had a second disc, this time containing four Francophone songs. 'The Story Of The Dogs' and '4 Of A Kind' are interesting reflections on Dogs' long career. Collectively the songs are solid rather than spectacular. Both albums feature good, tight playing and backing vocals. but don't rise to the standard of their best '80s work. Dominique's songs, in English or French, are decent without being exceptional. Happily, Dogs' recording career went out on a high. They began to play more French dates and a double live album was assembled from various live shows between '97 and 2000, and lives up to its title of *Short, Fast And Tight*. Many of the band's best songs are featured in stripped down but dynamic versions.

This feature began with an ending, but, as Alan Moore asserts at the end of his classic graphic novel *The Watchmen*, "Nothing really ends." Dogs' best music has stood the test of time. In July 2007 Rouen honoured their most talented modern musician by renaming the square on Rue Massacre La Place Dominique Laboubée. bramed by historic medieval timber-b·amed buildings is a wall portrait of Dominique by the graffiti artist Jéf Aerosol.

The Fleshtones often played and hung out with Dogs when touring in France. They recorded a fine tribute, which can be viewed on YouTube, simply titled 'Dominic Laboubée'. It is a sincere and heartfelt acknowledgement of his talent, so you can forgive them the couplet, "He did it for you, He did it for me, Dominic Laboubée." S!

With thanks to Robin Wills, Jeremy Thompson and Herb Denning

The Melodies Massacre Years is out now on Reminder

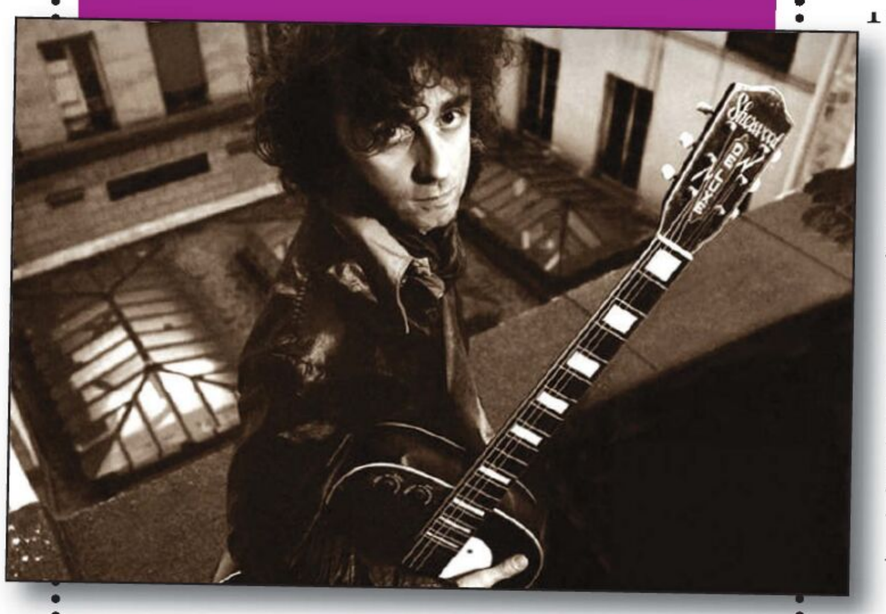
LAST DOG STANDING

ANTOINE MASY-PERIER played guitar on Dogs' seminal '80s albums

"In 1978 I was a kid living in the middle of nowhere on a farm in Burgundy. I read a little article in *Rock & Folk* by Philippe Garnier about Dogs. At that time, only the single 'Charlie Was A Good Boy' was available, and they were going to release *Go Where You Want To Go*. It felt like magic to me. So for The Day Of The Dead vacation I went to see them at Le Rose Bonbon in Paris, with the best French punk-rock band Les Olivensteins. At 1am, in front of 50 people, they played, and my life changed. I was 16. I went backstage to talk to them, and they were really nice to me. The next day I went back to see them again. Next month, David Johansen was playing at Le Palace. I managed to make it and I met Dominique there. We saw that Johansen had three guitar players, and Dominic told me that maybe someday he might take on another guitar player. To be that guitarist became my obsession... I left the farm in the summer, still in school and went to Rouen to start a new band with Gilles, the singer of Les Olivensteins, called Les Gloires Locales. Dominique let us rehearse in his basement and let us stay to watch Dogs rehearse too – more magic moments, full of beautiful reverb. Then they invited Gilles and I to play the encore with them. In February they had a little tour in the south of France and invited me to come with them (much more fun than school) and play the encore. After they were dropped by Philips, I started to rehearse seriously with them. We were in such harmony even though they were much better players than me!

"I am almost the last Dog standing, I still play a lot. I have played guitar with Les Wampas (French *yé yé*-punk band) for 20 years. I have released records under my name and with The Fleshtones, Little Band O' Gold, Les Grys-Grys and with different friends of mine under the name of Tony Truant & Ses Solutions."

As told to Phil Suggitt

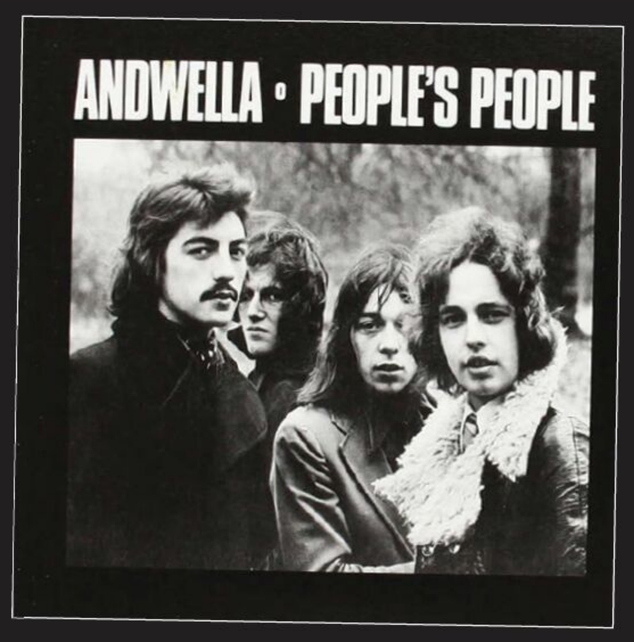


"I was hanging out in the King's Road, seeing all this lovely stuff." Andwella's Dream in 1968. L-R: Nigel Smith, Wilgar Campbell, Dave Lewis

Hold On To Your Mind

ANDWELLA'S DREAM / ANDWELLA cut three superb albums in little over a year. The drive and talent of young singer-songwriter Dave Lewis was undeniable and led to cult adoration. Lewis tells JON 'MOJO' MILLS about Swinging London, rushed recording sessions, and rubbing shoulders with musical royalty before it came to an end

Countless hopeful musicians not yet out of their teens sought success in London during the halcyon 1967-71 era after having honed their not inconsiderable talents in beat bands a couple of years earlier. From psychedelia to American infused singer-songwriter textures, the sound, not to mention the look, of these young hopefuls changed as their ability grew. A few would make the big time, leading to lifelong careers and riches beyond their wildest dreams. The majority however left a small body of work behind for subsequent generations to discover and savour.



"I was doing a residency in London's Smollensky's on The Strand in the early 2000s," explains Dave Lewis. "Barry Darcy, the guy who owned the flat that we all lived at in the late '60s, and designed the *World's End* album sleeve, came down to to see me. 'Do you remember that big box of *Love And Poetry* albums that we had in flat one time?' he asked. 'Do you still have them?' 'No, I don't know what happened to those,' I replied. And that was that. I never thought anything more about it until somebody told me a number of years later that it had been selling for a lot of money. Barry must have known. The idea of that makes me feel great, as I was so into it at the time. It's a real blessing that people have been turned onto it. My efforts weren't in vain, after all."

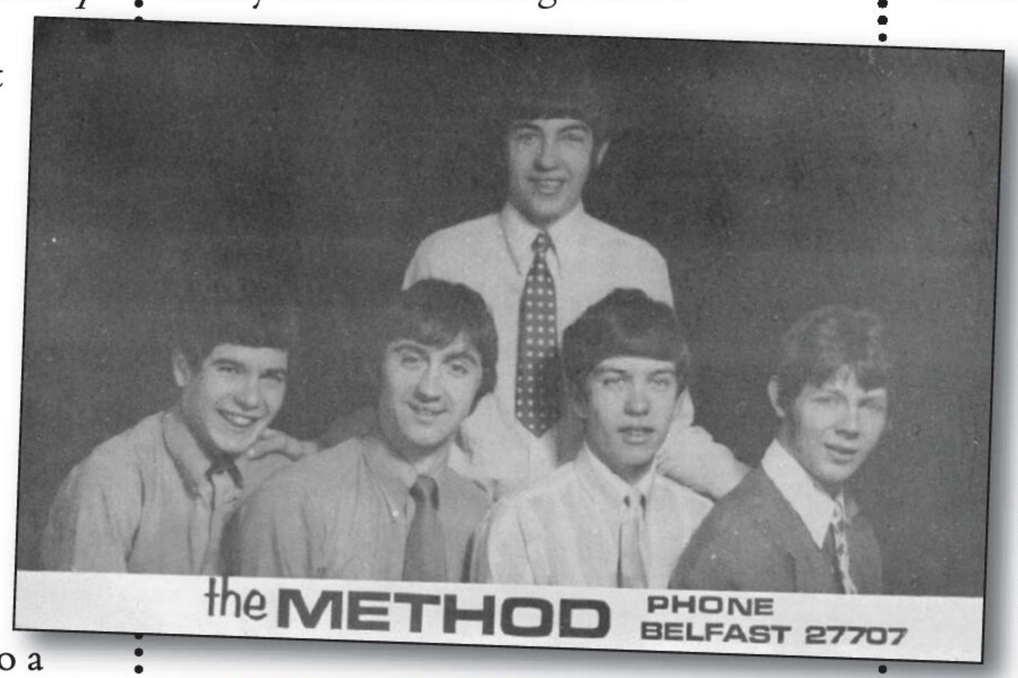
Not only is 1969 debut *Love And Poetry* now selling for upwards of £1000 on Discogs, Numero Group has just released all three albums by the band as a vinyl box set. Never has there been a better time to discover Andwella.

Lewis, like many of his musical peers and heroes, came of age at a time when the the whiff of something new was in the air. He joined popular Belfast group The Method on guitar in '67. At first a five-piece soul act, they soon slimmed down to a Cream-inspired trio, regularly making the journey across The Irish Sea from Belfast to Stranraer, followed by an eight-hour drive down to play in the English capital and music centre of the world. "My first impression of London was standing in The Marquee with the band, looking out on to Wardour Street," he gleefully recalls. "There were all these interesting looking people dressed in Carnaby Street gear, staring in the window to see who was playing. I remember, Nigel, Wilgar and I looking at each other thinking, 'No, we don't want to go back. This is it. This is where it's at.' London was amazing."

The Method's early shows were supports for The Nice and Jethro Tull. Not only did the young Belfast trio's covers of Hendrix and Cream register, but their skill in playing The Beatles' 'A Day In The Life' didn't go unnoticed. Brian Davison, The Nice's drummer, was most impressed. The constant travelling was a chore though, not to mention expensive.

"We didn't want to return to Belfast," laughs Lewis. "We stayed in London a couple of nights extra because we hadn't got a gig back in Ireland. To kill time, we were browsing in The Sound City music shop on Shaftesbury Avenue, where this guy tapped the drummer, Wil Campbell, on the shoulder, and said, 'Hey, you guys are a band, right? I know this sounds crazy, but can we go to the pub and talk?'"

It transpired that the man in question, Rocky Shahan, was himself a singer. Born in Pakistan, he had travelled to London in the late '50s in search of fame and fortune. The closest he had got to that was as bassist in The Konrads, backing the future David Bowie. By '68 he had gone solo and lost his band. "Shahan had a residency set up in Jersey," explains Lewis. "And he talked us into being his backing band. We thought, this guy's not going to happen, but we gave him the address of where we were staying in Bayswater. And sure enough, Rocky comes with all the tickets. We start to panic a bit, thinking, 'Are we really going to do this?' But we ended up sending the road manager back to Ireland with an empty van and got on a plane with all the Marshall amps on the fly and went to Jersey. On the opening night, Rocky came out on stage with a Bullfighters' jacket, singing 'Satisfaction'. We thought it was very funny, but after the third song he didn't come out anymore. We just finished the set. And then he decided he didn't want to be a singer anymore. He wanted to manage the band."



"We didn't want to return to Belfast. We stayed in London a couple of nights extra because we hadn't got a gig back in Ireland"

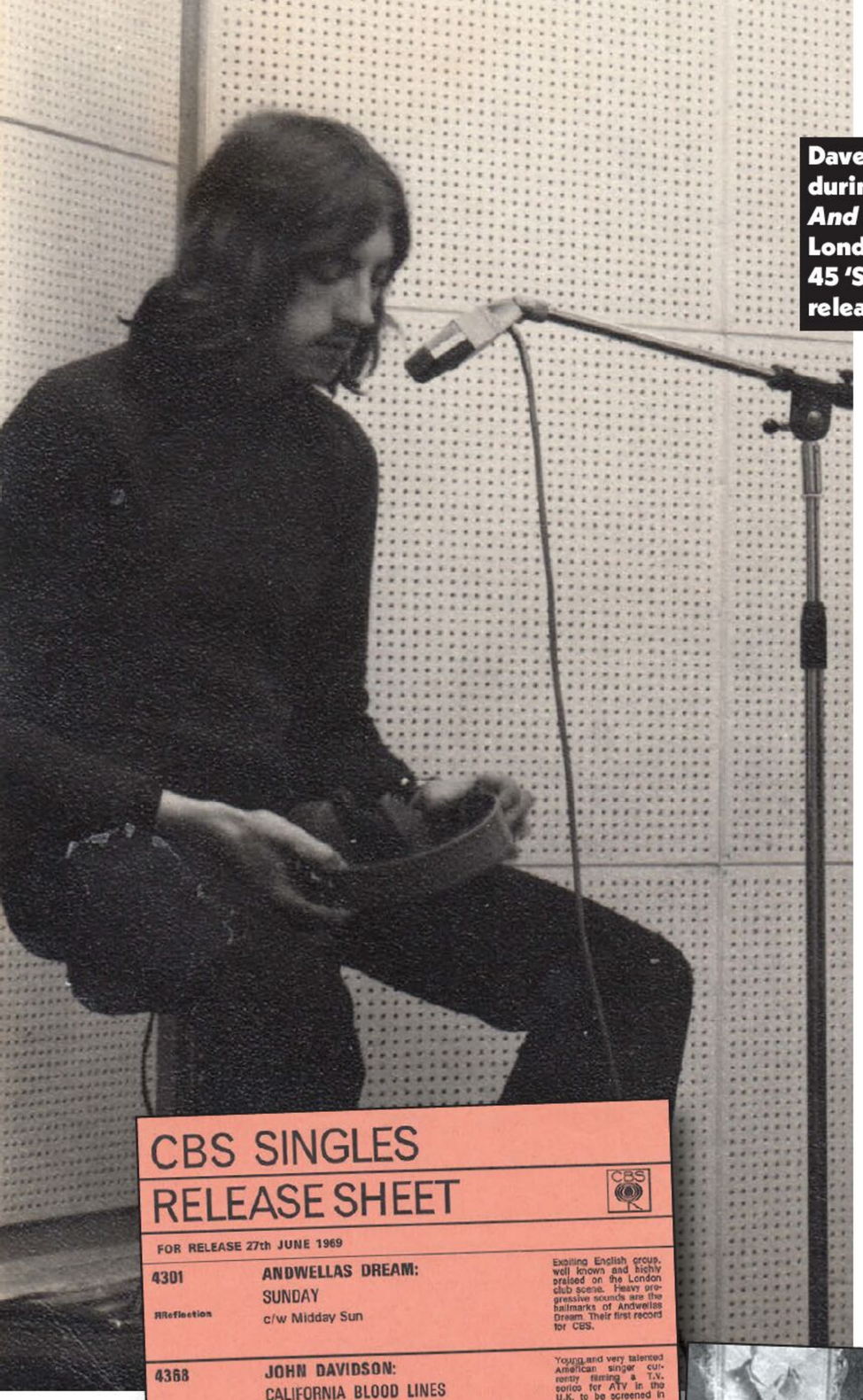
The summer of '68 was spent playing the channel island, and as the band gained confidence Lewis began to write original material. Shahan was enamoured by their progress and taped live shows, which he then sent back to industry contacts in London. The only thing he wasn't keen on was their somewhat passé name. Love & Poetry was suggested, but the band weren't enamoured with that. The Red Light District was considered, but it was Andwella's Dream on which they settled, which came to Dave in a dream.

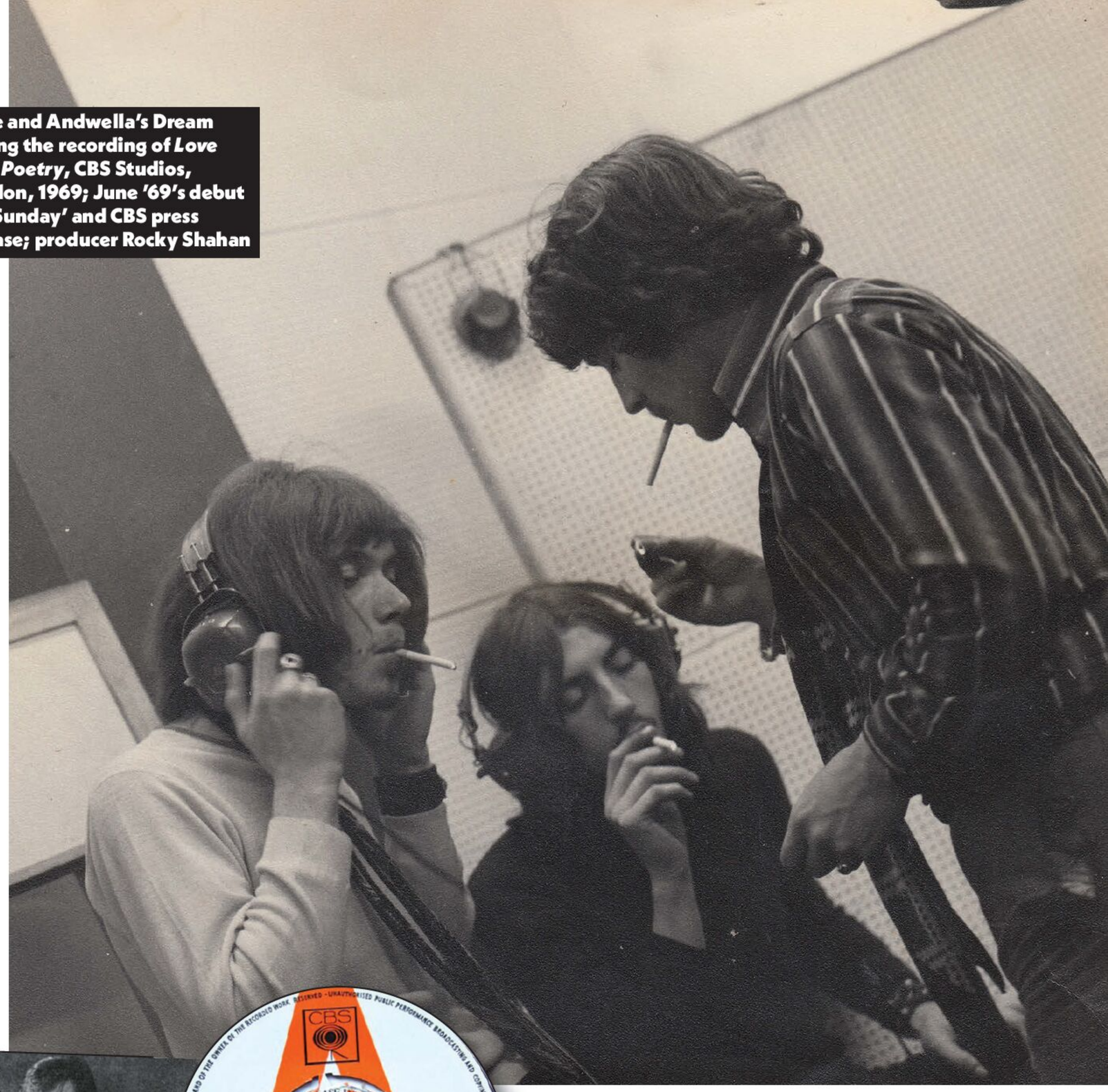
Andrew Cameron Miller of Reflection (who had just started releasing through CBS, having expanded AMP 'Artists Musical Productions', later to become a fully-fledged but short-lived label) was smitten by the recordings Shahan had sent. After flying to Jersey to see the newly christened Andwella's Dream play, he saw immense promise, particularly in the talented young Lewis and signed them. Miller had to fly out to Belfast with his charge, who was still a minor, for his father to sign the contract.

Andwella's Dream's retainer may have been slim, but it did cover a flat in North End Road, Fulham. Lewis was writing songs on a daily basis, inspired by all that was happening around him and the band would set up their gear in the living room and rehearse daily. The public school educated Miller introduced his teenage discovery to fine wine and dining whilst *avant-garde* musician Bob Downes became his guide to the counterculture. All was good. Recording soon began, with Bob Downes adding various shades of instrumentation that chimed with London's heady zeitgeist: bamboo flutes, finger-cymbals, tam tam. John Hawkins, who Miller kept in work as the in-house Refection arranger, added orchestration to a number of sessions. Andwella's Dream were here. However, drummer Wil Campbell wasn't settled. "Wilgar was married, and he had two young children back in Belfast," explains Lewis. "We had no bookings coming in as we didn't have an agent. There was no money. He left and returned home and then played with Rory Gallagher.

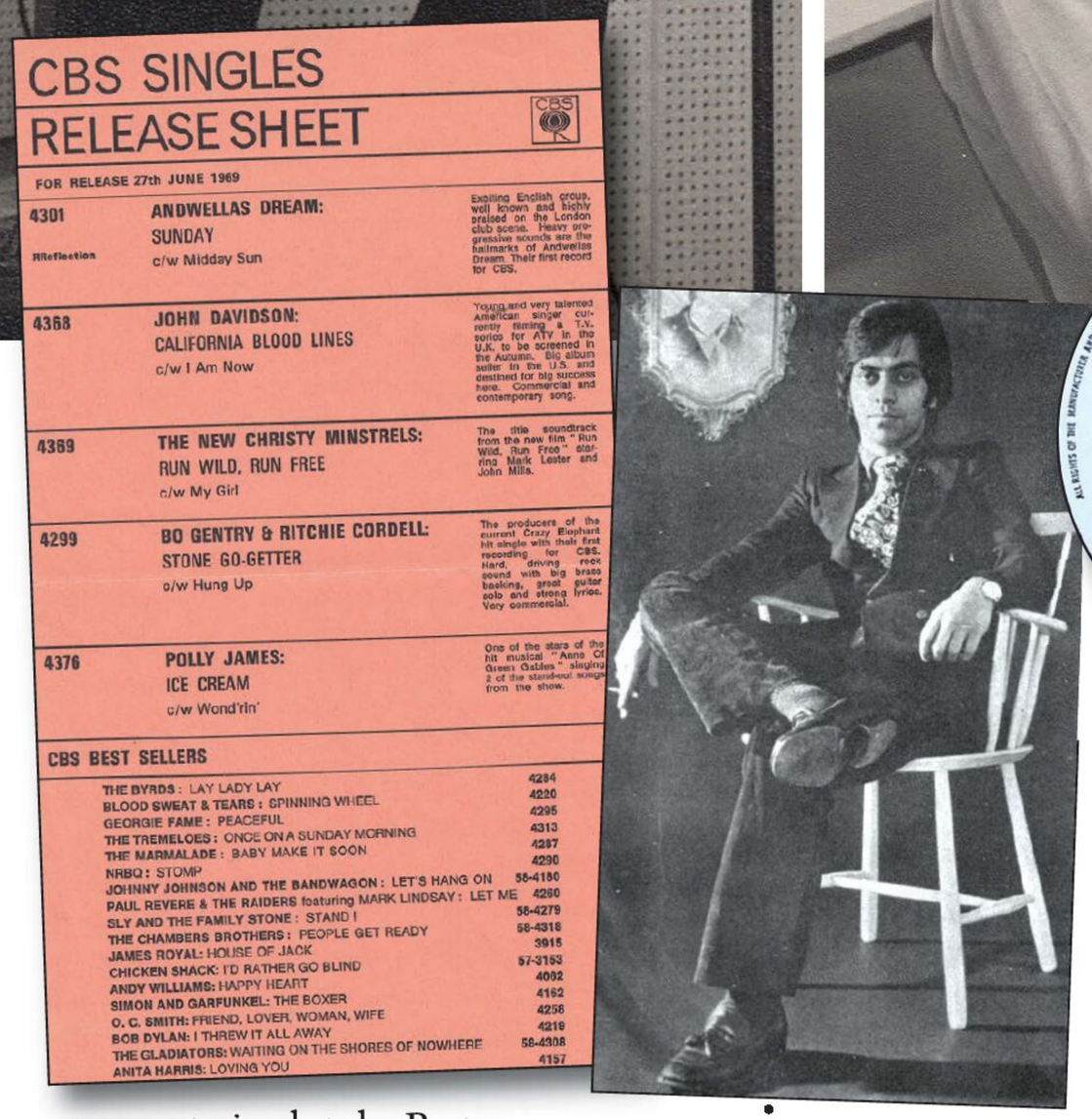
"The studio time was booked though, so we had to get another drummer in very quickly." Gordon Barton, who had drummed for mod band A Wild Uncertainty with The Spencer Davis Group's Eddie Hardin, was brought in. "Wilgar was the guy that we started with. He had a

Nigel Smith, Dave Lewis and Wilgar Campbell in 1967





Dave and Andwella's Dream during the recording of *Love And Poetry*, CBS Studios, London, 1969; June '69's debut 45 'Sunday' and CBS press release; producer Rocky Shahan



CBS SINGLES
RELEASE SHEET

FOR RELEASE 27th JUNE 1969

4301 (Reflection)	**ANDWELLAS DREAM:** SUNDAY c/w Midday Sun	Exciting English group, well known and highly praised on the London club scene. Heavy progressive sounds are the hallmarks of Andwellas Dream. Their first record for CBS.
4368	**JOHN DAVIDSON:** CALIFORNIA BLOOD LINES c/w I Am Now	Young and very talented American singer currently filming a T.V. series for ATV in the U.K. to be screened in the Autumn. Big album seller in the U.S. and destined for big success here. Commercial and contemporary song.
4369	**THE NEW CHRISTY MINSTRELS:** RUN WILD, RUN FREE c/w My Girl	The title soundtrack from the new film "Run Wild, Run Free" starring Mark Lester and John Mills.
4299	**BO GENTRY & RITCHIE CORDELL:** STONE GO-GETTER c/w Hung Up	The producers of the current Crazy Elephant hit single with their first recording for CBS. Hard, driving rock sound with big brass backing, great guitar solo and strong lyrics. Very commercial.
4376	**POLLY JAMES:** ICE CREAM c/w Wond'rin'	One of the stars of the hit musical "Anne Of Green Gables" singing 2 of the standout songs from the show.

CBS BEST SELLERS

THE BYRDS: LAY LADY LAY	4284
BLOOD SWEAT & TEARS: SPINNING WHEEL	4220
GEORGIE FAME: PEACEFUL	4295
THE TREMELOES: ONCE ON A SUNDAY MORNING	4313
THE MARMALADE: BABY MAKE IT SOON	4287
NRBQ: STOMP	4290
JOHNNY JOHNSON AND THE BANDWAGON: LET'S HANG ON	58-4180
PAUL REVERE & THE RAIDERS featuring MARK LINDSAY: LET ME	4260
SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE: STAND!	58-4279
THE CHAMBERS BROTHERS: PEOPLE GET READY	58-4318
JAMES ROYAL: HOUSE OF JACK	3915
CHICKEN SHACK: I'D RATHER GO BLIND	57-3153
ANDY WILLIAMS: HAPPY HEART	4062
SIMON AND GARFUNKEL: THE BOXER	4162
O. C. SMITH: FRIEND, LOVER, WOMAN, WIFE	4256
BOB DYLAN: I THREW IT ALL AWAY	4219
THE GLADIATORS: WAITING ON THE SHORES OF NOWHERE	58-4308
ANITA HARRIS: LOVING YOU	4157

very restrained style. Barton was more like Keith Moon. The dynamics were very different. Wilgar was the drummer that I got involved with in the first place. He was a good singer too. He was my way in. So I felt like I lost my right arm when he went back to Ireland." The album and what followed were excellent, but it really did seem that the loss of Campbell ended the close-knit relationship of the band. The only track he recorded was 'Felix', a song that Lewis still views with much fondness.

Work in Denmark Street's Pan Sound Studio was rapid, and the musicians soon adapted to their new surroundings. Overdubs were completed at CBS studios and Recorded Sound. Shahan was listed as producer but wasn't at all hands on. *Love And Poetry,* although done on the cheap, is an astounding debut, marked by Lewis' fiery guitar, assured vocals, Hammond flourishes, and songs that veer between rock, folkish and bluesy acoustic pieces, and psychedelia, topped off with Bob Downe's experimental embellishments. It all chimed with how music was heading in the era in which pop became progressive. Lewis may have only been 17, but he'd absorbed what was going on around him and reinterpreted it through a string of lyrically rich songs. Although ill promoted for a major label release, it was a record that would have equally appealed to fans of Traffic, Audience, and Terry Reid.

The tough, almost proto-punk 'Sunday' and Beatles-ish 'Midday Sun' preceded the trippily attired August '69 album as a 45. Neither received much notice or airplay. And the band wasn't gigging much. A short Scandinavian tour followed, and Dave remembers sharing a hotel with The Strawbs, and how Dave Cousins was impressed by their music. But that was about it. Returning home from the tour bassist Nigel Smith decamped to his hometown Nottingham, and although not strictly having quit, the regular rehearsals and options of London gigs was over. As was the '60s. "I was 17 going on 18," says Lewis regarding the band not taking off and older member's expectations not being met and their commitment dwindling. "Barry, who owned the flat, was great. He knew all about the London scene, so I was hanging out in the King's Road, seeing all this lovely stuff. I was still having a great time."

Dave then began work on a new set of songs. Keeping in vogue with the changing times he also dropped the psychedelic-ish "Dream" element of their name, working under the starker, punchier Andwella; a singular name for a band that was now somewhat singular. It does seem likely, in hindsight, that Miller had always had an eye on Lewis alone and considered him to be the songwriter and focal point. He was not that put out by the "band's situation".

In true counter-cultural style Reflection, now releasing records on their own label, were true risk takers, and their roster of eclectic artists represented that. One such maverick was the poet Dave Baxter, whom Miller had Lewis produce. *Goodbye Dave* (available on Qobuz and all streaming platforms) is well worth a listen. "Sue Baxter, David's wife was a want-to-be jazz singer. We all lived in Chelsea, as I had left 379 North End Road when Nigel moved out. At first, I was living on Cheyne Walk, but because Andrew had a penthouse flat in Glebe Place and the flat underneath was vacant, he moved me in there. David Baxter lived about 10 minutes away on Tite Street, so we used to hang out together. He had been relatively successful in a number of stage productions. In those heady days he was also something of a stoned poet. I used to go to his flat and hang out with him at

night, have a few drinks, and go to the local bar and shoot some pool. He knew his stuff and turned me onto The Band, who were a major revelation for me."

A series of recording sessions followed in a small studio on Old Church Street with Dave improvising suitable music to Baxter's spoken-word passages. It's a hallucinogenic experience that all Andwella fans need to hear, not unlike the kind of madcap freak-out poetry and prose of The Fugs and Deviants, just rather posher and camper. Lewis had become a bit of a go to man, and he loved it.

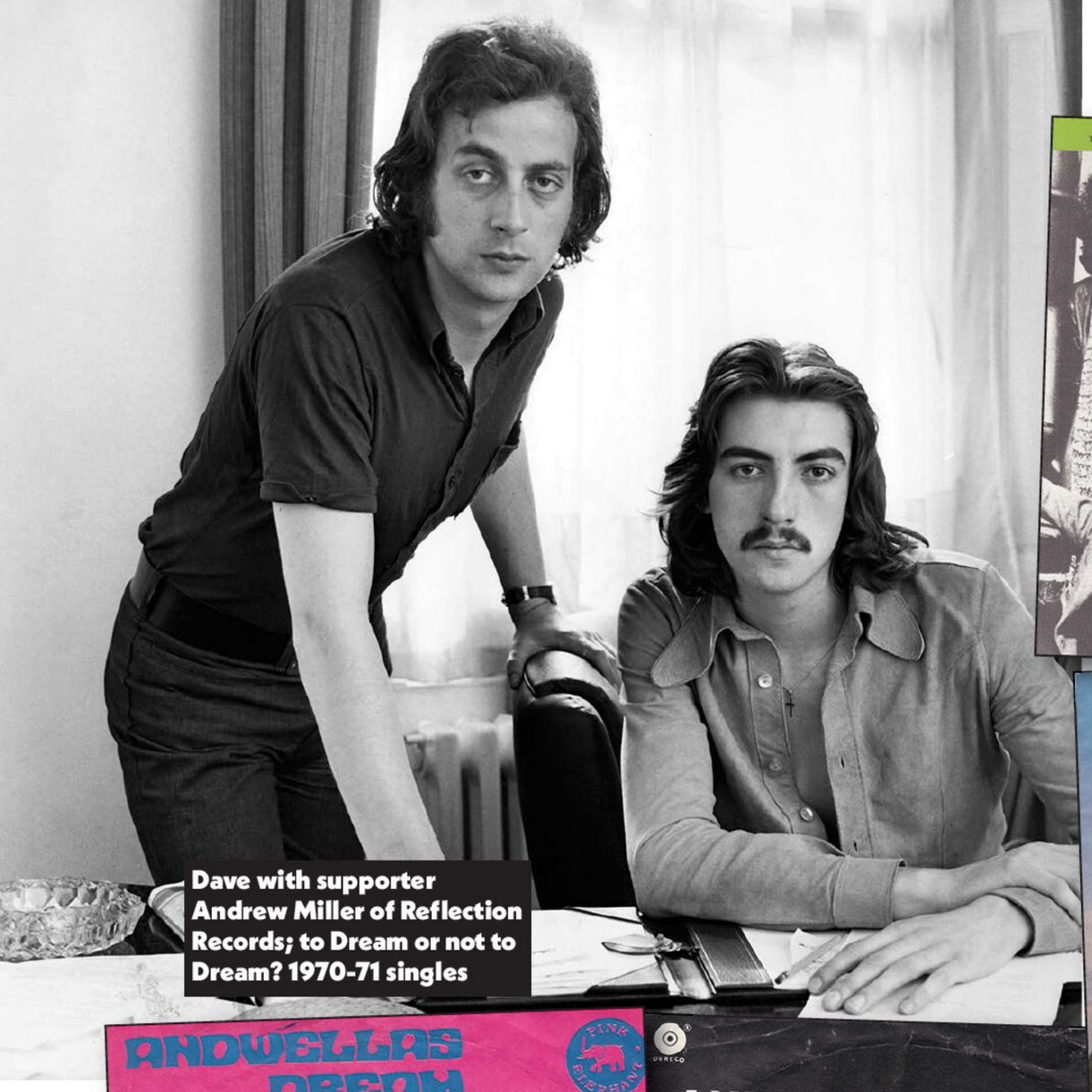
Over this time the young London-based musician met Scottish keyboard player Dave McDougall, who had been in and written for the Allan Clarke produced The Societe, who issued one magnificent single for Deram in '67. The two got on and agreed they would play together on the next Andwella sessions. Meanwhile, Lewis had come into the orbit of acclaimed singer/songwriter Bobby Scott, who'd penned the perennial 'A Taste Of Honey' and The Hollies' 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother', and was currently working on Catherine Howe's folk-pop gem *What A Beautiful Place* and his own eccentric solo effort *Robert William Scott*. He was now also behind the American division of Reflection. "I'd never met anybody like Bobby Scott before. He was half Sioux Native American and half Irish. He was an incredible keyboard player and an amazing singer. He used to play piano with Quincy Jones, and countless others. He somehow saw something in me and used to take me out to expensive restaurants." Lewis also recalls how sitting around the piano and playing songs together was pivotal on the songs chosen and recorded for *World's End*.

Both Scott and Miller held a lot of faith in Lewis, and even with the failure of *Love And Poetry*, a lot of money was invested in the follow-up album. Lewis, Smith, new boy McDougall, and Barton gathered together at Trident and began recording.

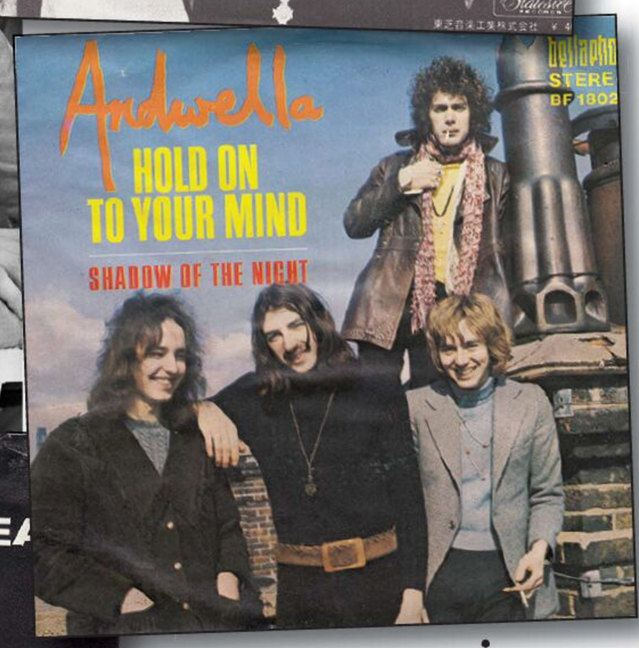
"I'd left Ireland as a lead guitar player with a Gibson Les Paul. By the time it got to *People's People*, I was solely writing on an acoustic"

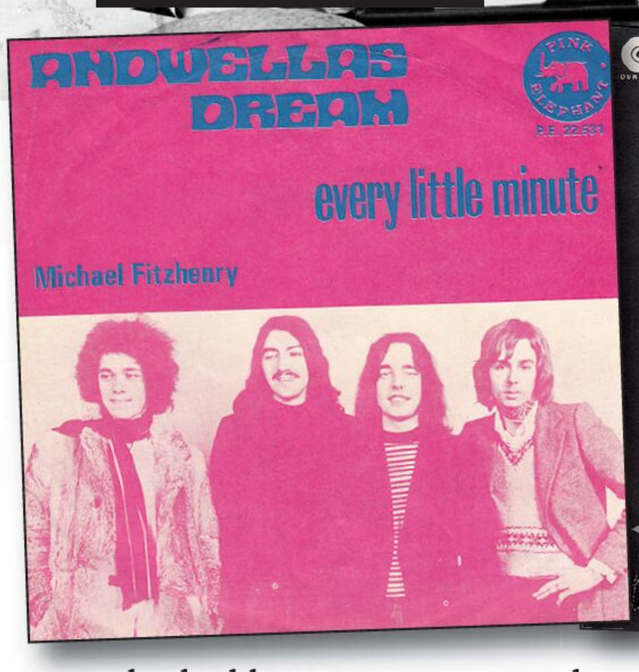
Bobby Scott provided the gorgeous orchestral 'World's End Part 1', which John Hawkins beautifully arranged. Scott requested Lewis to write a 'Part 2' that would follow it on the album. The initial idea proposed was for the title song to be about the area in Chelsea, which was being radically redeveloped, but Lewis read it as a more biblical phrase. The theme in turn led to the Christ imagery on the cover, which was dour, yet somehow fitting. The collection of songs and styles aptly showed off Lewis' impressive vocals and multi-instrumental smarts, including bluesy guitar ('Michael Fitzhenry' certainly gives Clapton and the Mac a run for their money, while 'I Got A Woman' recalls Santana), as well as flute and organ. The percussive opener 'Hold On To Your Mind', with McDougall's funky piano, foreshadowed Italo house music, while elsewhere the album veers off into a deeper sense of poetic songwriting that displayed Lewis' growing obsession with The Band. It was a transitional record that moved away from the debut's stylistic and positioned Lewis as a singer-songwriter, although 'Hold On To Your Mind' and 'Just How Long' still bore the influence of rock. *World's End*, sadly once again, was not a success. There was, as with the later acclaim for *Love And Poetry,* and another better-late-than-never story regarding the final album, a then unknown success story regarding lead single and opener 'Hold On To Your Mind', on the back of the US wing of Reflection. New York disc jockey David Mancuso, the pioneer of the disco movement, regularly opened his dance parties with the song, an accidentally tailor-made piece of music for the newly emerging counterculture. However, after the release of *World's End* in August '70 the band crumbled. Firstly, Nigel Smith,

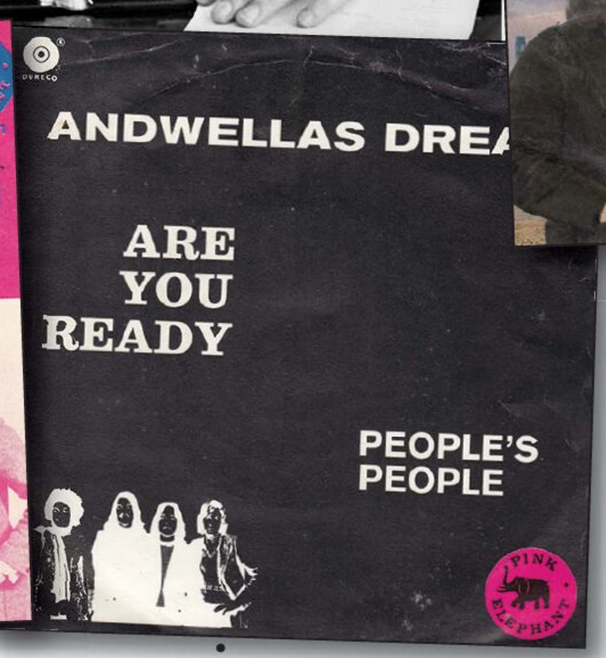
Getting back to basics with new drummer Gordon Barton, right (top); the reconfigured Andwella in 1970



Dave with supporter Andrew Miller of Reflection Records; to Dream or not to Dream? 1970-71 singles







who had been non-committal since the failure of the debut handed in his notice, followed by the departure of drummer Gordon Barton.

Reflection seemed to care little about their expenses not being returned from the album and promptly cast a solo David Lewis into the studio to record *The Songs Of David Lewis*. Initially, this wasn't meant to be released as an album and was originally intended as a collection of demos for the publishers to sell. But it did gain a release. The songs are more commercial and piano-based, in line with the American singer-songwriters Lewis was inspired by. Joni Mitchell's *Blue* was pivotal. "A lot of the stuff that I was taking in was influencing me in that progression,"concurs Lewis. Again, the album did nothing, but it did signal a direction that the artist wanted to explore further.

Andwella continued, Dave McDougall's old Socitie mate Dave Struthers was brought in on bass, and Jack McCulloch, ex-Thunderclap Newman was recruited on drums, but he didn't last for the forthcoming sessions, which were played by jazz-rocker's Nucleus' John Marshall. McCulloch did nearly get his brother Jimmie to join though, but the Wings' gig beckoned.

Reflection was having financial difficulties after its arrangement with CBS crumbled, but the album was still planned to go ahead. Trident studios were once again entered with engineer Robin Cable, and Lewis recollects Roy Thomas Baker being present and manning the boards too. Reflection's Cameron and Phil Gillin shared the production credits, but Lewis and his "new band" (essentially session men) were free to do as they pleased. As this was their most stripped-back album, and the 11 songs all clearly inspired by The Band, the production was kept simple.

"I'd left Ireland as a lead guitar player with a Gibson Les Paul and a Hammond organ," reflects Lewis of his youthful musical journey. "By the time it got to *People's People*, the Les Paul had gone out the window with the Hammond. I had a Martin acoustic guitar and was the guy soley writing on an acoustic. That was a big change."

People's People is a lovely album, but it was very much a David Lewis album. The real "Andwella band" having died after the debut. The two follow ups were very much records made with musicians after the original group dynamic eroded. "We didn't rehearse either," states Lewis. "John Marshall just turned up for the sessions and that was it. It was a session for all involved. End of."

Shortly after recording the album, the young singer-songwriter got to meet his new favourite musical inspirations, The Band. This came about after George Harrison's personal assistant Terry Doran, who Lewis had become really friendly with back in The Speakeasy days, dropped in to visit. With him was The Band's road manager Jonathan Taplin. Lewis made a good impression after playing some of his new songs on piano and was subsequently invited up to George Martin's Air studio, where Robbie Robertson was working.

"A couple of days later, a limo comes down, picks me up, and takes me up to to Air. There's Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm, and they rolled the machine. The thing was, they wanted me to put down songs that were unpublished and not recorded. Robbie was interested in getting into producing people, but I didn't have any spare songs. I only had the stuff I had used for the *People's People* album. I don't think Jon Taplin realised that when he came to visit, so I only had a few scraps with me. I sat down at the piano and guitar, and they recorded a few of these ideas. When I went into the control room, the sound they got on my voice was unlike anything I had heard before. It was brilliant. We then went to watch them at the Albert Hall. It was left that when we were in Los Angeles promoting the album that we would fly up to Woodstock. But it never happened."

On the back of Neil Young and co leaving the city for a rural lifestyle, the mood reached the UK. Like many young musicians burnt out on clubs and pubs and incessant partying, Lewis moved to a thatched cottage in Selsey, West Sussex for a quieter life with his wife. "Andrew just wanted to get me out of London and harm's way. Well, that was my initial impression. My wife and I were really young, and she became pregnant, so I didn't want to go back to London.

"Shortly after *People's People* was completed Reflection Records went into liquidation. I think that's why Andrew got me out of London really. I didn't know what was going on. Dave McDougall was the only one that was still around, and we weren't really communicating. It wasn't a hard split like The Beatles. Andwella, or what was left of it, just fizzled out." With David soon to become a new father, the Dream was over.

The albums left behind are a cohesive body of work reflective of the move from London psychedelia to Band-inspired Americana, which so many urban-based bands followed. All three merit repeat listens. The adoration that *Love And Poetry* received years later came as a great thrill, as did the discovery of Andwella's cult legacy in Japan, which led to Lewis playing there in the 21st century with a band of knowledgeable musician fans. The latest surprise is the use of 'She Taught Me To Love', from *People's People,* being used in a Gucci eye-wear advert, which hopefully landed Dave a few quid.

As we know all too well at this magazine, acclaim can come late. S!

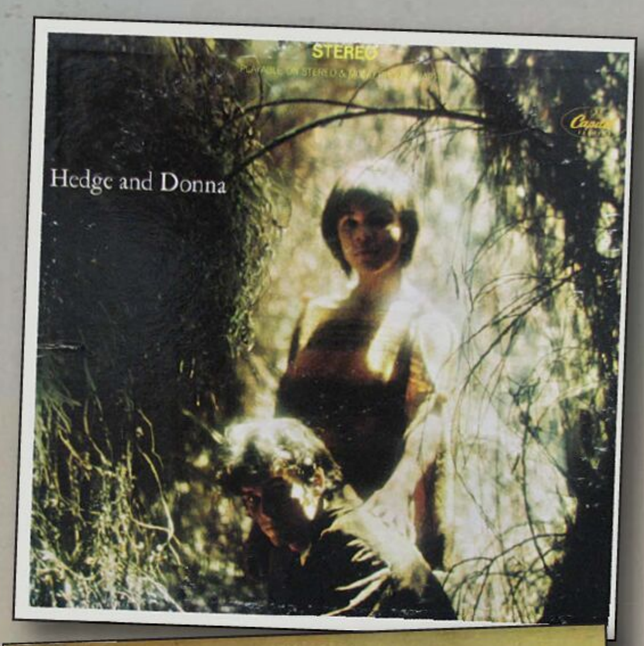
To Dream out now on Numero Group. Dave Lewis plays a one-off show of Andwella's repertoire at St Pancras Old Church, London on 14th April

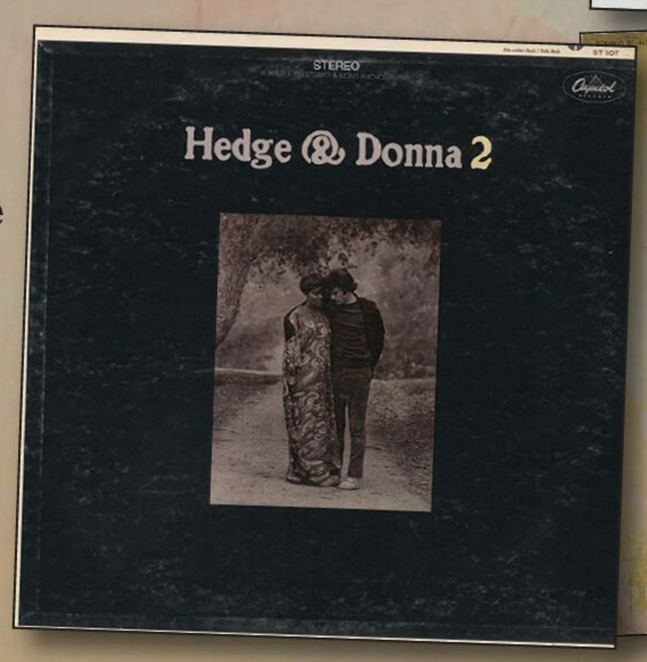
All The ~ Friendly ~ Colours

Across six consistently excellent albums of soulful funky folk, **HEDGE & DONNA** recorded some of the most powerful and beautiful music to emerge during The Age Of Aquarius. But being a mixed-race couple in the public eye proved troublesome for some, and the duo's breakthrough was thwarted time and time again.

HUGH DELLAR catches up with Keene Hedges Capers.
Portrait by **PETER SIMON**

As some older readers may remember, in the run-up to the millennium there appeared a carefully curated genre known as folk-funk. Scooped up in this broad umbrella – and lovingly collated on a whole host of compilations – was everything from Terry Callier to Deram obscurities by Sunforest, *Bewitched* actress Nancy Priddy to Paul Butterfield sidekick Bugsy Maugh. One LP that suddenly soared in value around this time was *Prelude To…* by Barbara & Ernie, a mixed-race couple whose lazy, hazy version of 'Somebody To Love' hovers right on the cusp of psychedelic folk and laidback soulful grooves. Their sole album started hitting three-figure prices, got reissued and the duo came in for all manner of retrospective praise. Meanwhile, hidden away in bargain bins across the States lay multiple albums by another mixed-race, male-female pairing who were somehow passed over at the time. Maybe now the folk-funk dust has more or less settled, it's time to reappraise the work of Keene Hedges Capers and Donna Marie Carson, better known as Hedge & Donna.





"Music and sound had the capacity to change people." Donna Marie Carson and Keene Hedge Capers, October 1968; albums one to three (opposite)

Donna and Hedge circa 1967; formative live appearances, including Joni Mitchell's LA debut; a selection of singles

The talented duo were both born into military families as the Second World War ground to an end, Hedge in Princeton, New Jersey, where his father was in a seminary to become a navy chaplain and where a neighbour by the name of Albert Einstein would sometimes push his baby buggy around, and Donna in McAlester, Oklahoma. Her father was a Marine drill instructor, a sergeant and the heavyweight boxing champion of the corps. He'd been the only son in a family with 11 sisters and had apparently "joined the Marines to get away from all the skirts, but then he married his wife Dottie and had five daughters. The best laid plans!"

Donna grew up singing Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald songs with her mother and sisters, whilst Hedge sang every day with his big sister Ruthie and soaked up the diverse sounds that his mum Betty played on her portable reel-to-reel, which was carted around from temporary home to temporary home during his peripatetic childhood.

Hedge later came to feel that the fact both he and Donna had had military upbringings helped form their worldviews. "We'd often talk about how growing up in military settings," he begins, "on or near bases, we only saw rank and rate as the hierarchy – not age or sex, gender or race. In hindsight, that was probably naive, but it was how we saw the world. I think our being interracial was a bigger issue for others than it was for us. We shared a love for music and each other."

But we're getting ahead of ourselves here. From a very young age, Hedge knew all he ever wanted to do was sing. Luckily for him, having stoically sucked up the traumas of Korea (his dad Hedges Senior had survived the horrors of The Battle Of Chosin Reservoir), World War Two and The Great Depression, his parents wanted their offspring to live life to the full. "The kind of support and permission I received from both my parents was the kind you need when you're entering a field where the likelihood of success is near non-existent," he explains. "And I did and am proof that it's possible to defy the odds. The truth has always been that if it's all you want to do, there really is no choice."

By the early '60s, Hedge was fronting local rock 'n' roll bands and by a peculiar twist of fate, he came to the attention of a self-made star and Svengali. What ensued provided him with his first taste of the bittersweet nature of showbiz. "In 1962, Kim Fowley came to Monterey, California for a blind date. She stood him up, but he decided it might not be a complete waste if he could find some talent in that town. He went to the local radio station asking if there was any. The station manager recognised him as he'd produced a slew of hits including the smash 'Alley Oop' by The Hollywood Argyles, and so ended up giving my name. Kim came to our house looking like Ichabod Crane, all six-foot-five of him. He asked if I wrote any songs, and I told him I'd started writing about four years earlier while learning to play guitar. I simply couldn't work out how to play what was on the radio, so I started writing in order to be able to sing. He listened to a few of my things and said, 'I think we ought to write something together.' That day, we wrote two songs, and he left saying he'd be in touch. A few weeks later, I got the invite to go to Hollywood and sign with Rendezvous Records. It felt like my dreams were coming true!

"We recorded at Rendezvous, a studio on Selma off Vine with Jerry Riopelle engineering the songs. The A-side was called 'Broken Home, Broken Heart'. Afterwards, my dad drove me back to Monterey to wait. A few weeks later, the bad news arrived. 'We are sorry to let you know we will not be releasing 'Broken Home, Broken Heart'. We don't think you'll be successful as a recording artist. Your sibilants are just too prominent. You pop on your P's and hiss on your S's. We aren't able to fix them or cover them.' That had been my first time in a studio! I mean, come on guys! You have to LEARN how to work a mic. Couldn't they just have said, 'Sorry, but it didn't work out?'"

Had this initial setback happened to someone with less self-belief or talent, it may well have proved terminal. However, for Hedges, it provided the gateway towards self-realisation and pointed a way forward. "Initially, it was depressing. I didn't sing for a few weeks after that before deciding, 'Fuck it! Our band doesn't get complaints. Folks at Sancho Panza never say anything on folk nights.'

Hedge, October 1968; the duo photograped for the back cover of the same year's self-titled debut album

It was time to keep on keeping on. A few months later, while trying to decide what the right way to sing a song I'd written was, I realised that any way I decided to sing it was the right way, and as I started to sing, I felt the music coming out of my pores. It was *moving* me. I'd never felt anything like that before. I was realising how incredibly beautiful, spiritual and powerful music really is. Music and sound had the capacity to change people. That was one of the most humbling experiences of my life."

By '66, Hedge had entered Whittier College, a Quaker liberal arts set-up in southern California that had been founded by The Religious Society Of Friends, and was the alma mater of Richard Nixon, only America's second Quaker president. It was here that he met Donna Carson. The two were drawn together and by early '67, they'd started performing together, both singing with Capers on guitar and occasional bass. The couple married later that same year in San Diego.

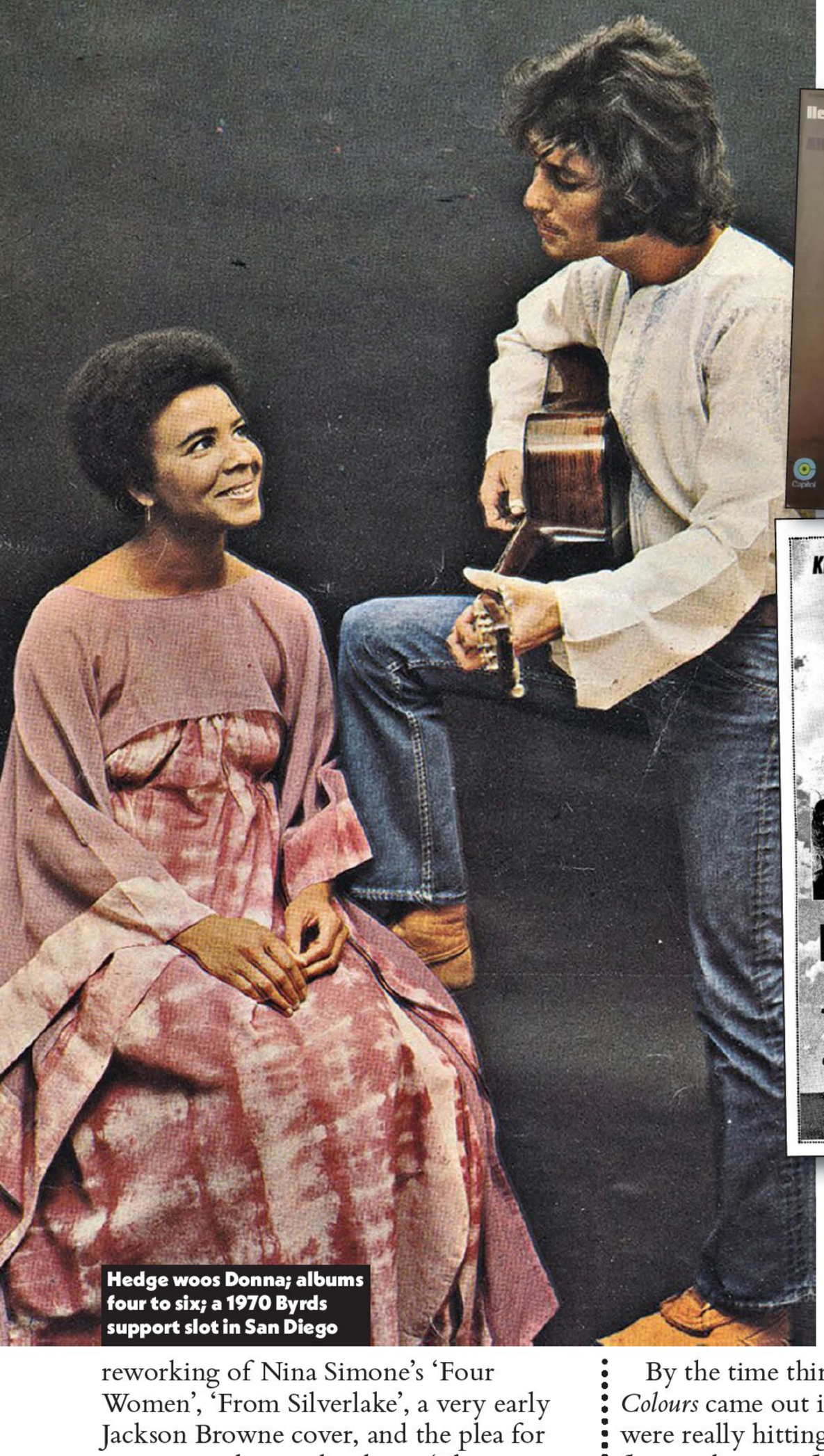
They'd heard that The Troubadour in LA held open mic nights on Mondays, and by May of '67 had been singing together for a month. With the four songs they knew, they decided to give it a go on stage together. Hedge recalls that they "Stood in line to sign-up and were told the routine. You get to sing three songs, then run off stage and touch the back wall. If the audience keeps clapping, you may get an encore. We did our four songs to standing ovations. When asked to do more, we said we only know those four and so did two of them again. The Hoot-Master Larry Murray then ushered us to the dressing room. There, Nick Venet, a producer who'd worked with The Stone Poneys, Bobby Darin, The Beach Boys – everyone – asked us to sign with Capitol Records. Shortly after that, Doug Weston, the owner of The Troubadour, became our manager."

"We did our four songs to standing ovations. **Nick Venet**, a producer who'd worked with The Stone Poneys, Bobby Darin, The Beach Boys – everyone – asked us to sign with Capitol Records. Shortly after that, **Doug Weston**, the owner of The Troubadour, became our manager"

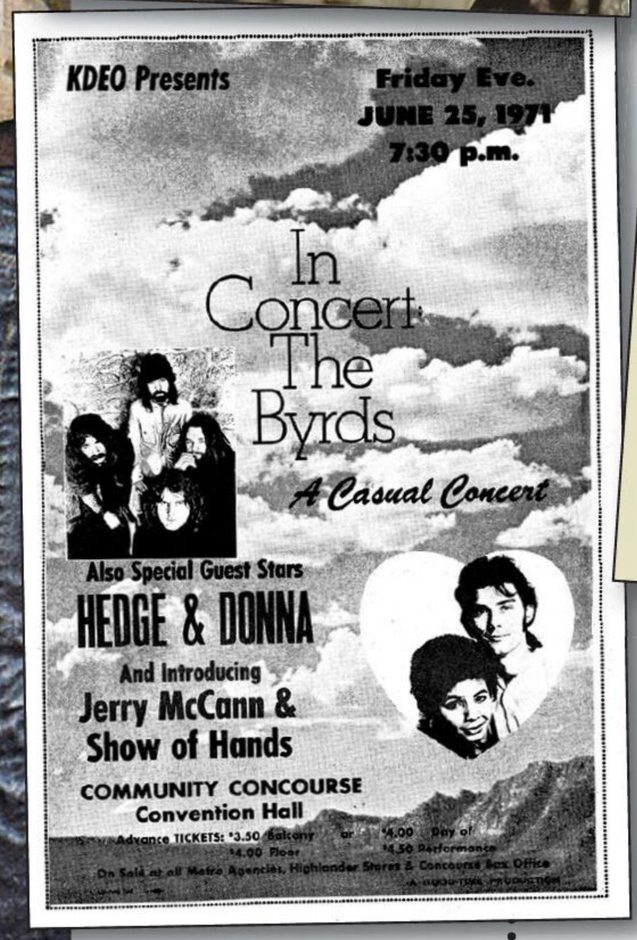
By '68, they were attracting the attention of *Billboard* magazine, which described them as "a class act, combining expert harmonising and strong vocal prowess" and, of course, there were also plenty of comments on the fact they were a mixed-race act at a time when The Deep South in particular was still deeply divided and segregated.

Their self-titled debut LP (sometimes also known as *Love* as this title was printed on the label but not the cover, for some arcane reason) hit the shops in February with a cover shot that made the inter-racial nature of their relationship somewhat vague. Alongside covers of Donovan and Tim Buckley songs were originals like 'Sea Gull', which wouldn't have been out of place on Buckley's debut from a couple of years earlier, and the beautiful showcase duet 'Midnight', with its layer of lush warm vocals drizzled over an acoustic guitar and a loose, soulful backbeat.

While the album failed to set the charts ablaze, it clearly did well enough to merit a follow-up that was released just seven months later. The rather unimaginatively title of *Hedge & Donna 2* masks a record bursting with ideas and emotions. Again, there are some scattered originals, and then there's also the sparse, stark



Hedge woos Donna; albums four to six; a 1970 Byrds support slot in San Diego



reworking of Nina Simone's 'Four Women', 'From Silverlake', a very early Jackson Browne cover, and the plea for patience and empathy that is 'Please Understand Me' by another Whittier College alumnus Billy Batson, who went on to record with Holy Moses.

All through this time, the pair were gigging, as they had something of a residency at The Troubadour. Around this time, they played with Joni Mitchell on her first performance in LA. They also had an interesting approach to gigs connected with The Vietnam War, as Hedge explains. "I once asked my father how a minister could accept being on a battlefield. His response stopped me cold. After a thoughtful pause, he said, 'I have two responsibilities. It's my job to bless the boys as they go into battle, and to be on the battlefield in case someone happens to turn human.'

"Donna and I sang in a number of churches for folks taking sanctuary, opposing the draft, but we also sang for injured troops at The Naval Hospital in San Diego. As intensely as I was opposed to the war, I was also embarrassed at how our segments of hippie society seemed blind to the fact that the kids on the ground there had been drafted – very few actually volunteered. As a culture, we had welcomed vets returning from WWII and Korea as heroes, but we seemed to turn our backs on Vietnam vets. Shame on you, America, and shame on us!"

By the time third LP *All The Friendly Colours* came out in August '69, the pair were really hitting their stride. From the flute and sitar-inflected opener 'The Pride Of The Rain' and 'Bluebird' (not the Buffalo Springfield song) to the album's highlight 'There's A Wheel', the church gospel influence is very noticeable, as are the modern folk-soul hybrids popularised by Terry Callier and Richie Havens. It's a set of songs that wraps you up in its warmth and soothes and calms all worries.

"One little eight-year-old girl asked Donna if she knew me, to which she replied that I was her husband. The girl looked at her friends, then to me, then to Donna, and, shaking her head, said, **'But he doesn't look at all Black!'**"

However, it was around this time that being a very visible mixed-race couple was starting to create concerns for some. "On February 16th '69, Donna and I were on The Smothers Brothers' TV show. They received an Emmy for the photography of our faces merging into one, but that segment did not air in the South. Later that year, we opened at The Hungry I in San Francisco for Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. They were incredibly kind to us and announced that we would all be welcomed in the South, so on 5th July '70, we accepted an invite to perform at The Atlanta Rock Festival in front of a sea of happy folks as far as we could see... except for one: Lester Maddox, the governor of Georgia, who was clearly not happy with us playing in his neck of the woods. He sent a Lear jet to buzz the stage during our performance. Disturbing, to say the least. Maddox's pilot made two loud passes, then let us finish undisturbed. The crowd booed as the jet passed and applauded when it was gone. It never buzzed the stage for any other performers. He was sending us a message.

"We never returned to play the South, but almost a year later we got an education. Shortly after Atlanta, Donna got pregnant. I was asked to play the lead role in the film *The Legend Of Hillbilly John* and I wrote 10 songs for the movie, which was great! We'd spent 44 months of the first four years on the road, so this gave us a paid break and a rest for Donna. We were shooting outside Little Rock, Arkansas, and filmed one scene on a cotton field and used a large group from a local church as extras. Donna worked with a group of about a dozen young kids. They saw us interacting easily with

one another and it was clear I had the lead role. One little eight-year-old girl asked Donna if she knew me, to which she replied that I was her husband. The girl looked at her friends, then to me, then to Donna, and, shaking her head, said, 'But he doesn't look at all Black!' For these kids I had to be Black – that was the only possible explanation for us being married!"

As the new decade began, the couple were flying high. They'd been featured on the cover of *Sepia* and *Jet* magazine in suitably groovy attire, with the latter describing them as working "the gamut of songs from blues and soul to spirituals and folk". They had gigged all over the country, playing with everyone from Tim Hardin and Spirit to James Taylor and Harry Belafonte, and had appeared on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, *The Della Reese Show*, *Soul Train* and more (though sadly no footage seems to have survived).

In May '70, fourth LP *Special Circumstances* came out, and featured Janis Ian playing on their interpretation of her 'He's A Rainbow'. Also included is the transcendentally blissful 'Becoming' and the funky, flowing free soul of 'River'. Yet still the breakthrough remained elusive, and in '71, they found themselves moving to Polydor, where they released the final Hedge & Donna in June.

With a cover that both paid homage to and subverted Grant Wood's famous 'American Gothic' painting, and its title – *Revolution* with the R crossed out – it was a striking-looking record, and one that was offered free on the back of the Boston-based *Fusion* music mag if you took out a subscription. The opener, 'Touch Caste On The Water', featured a lazily propulsive backbeat, a brass section, and the usual interwoven soulful singing, and was also released a 45. There's also an intense cover of The Beatles' 'She Said, She Said' that transforms the track into a deep Sunday morning comedown cut that's been taken to church and sanctified.

Yet again though, the public failed to bite in sufficient numbers resulting in the couple and Polydor going their separate ways. In '72 they had a son, Ethan, and their final LP didn't emerge until April '73, by which time they'd signed to the eclectic Janus label, which had released recordings by everyone from Status Quo to Cymande and Al Stewart. This final roll of the dice also involved a change of name as Hedge & Donna reverted to their surnames – Capers & Carson. The 10 tracks on this self-titled LP now stand up as among the best they ever recorded – achingly lovely, steeped in southern soul, lush, romantic, and incredibly uplifting. On the gritty groove of 'Well I Never', there's even an oblique nod to 'Honky Tonk Women', while 'My Child' is a soaring ode to parenthood.

Around this time, Hedge beat Arlo Guthrie to the role of the folk singer in the '72 movie *Who Fears The Devil?* – reissued later as *The Legend Of Hillbilly John*. The elevator pitch for the movie apparently ran along the lines of, "So it's about a wandering ballad singer in the Appalachians who fights the Devil with his silver-stringed guitar." Hedge penned much of the music.

Sadly, Hedge and Donna divorced in '76, with Donna going on to work with special needs kids at The California State Diagnostic School and as a child advocate supervisor for the LA country courts before passing on 21st November 2019. Hedges later remarried and along with his wife, Nancy Locke, trained as a psychotherapist. The couple have come up with TV series *The Smartlys* and co-wrote a musical about growing old, *The Geeze And Me*, which opened in San Diego in 2017. He remains active and writing and has been a pleasure to interact with in the telling of this story.

The Legend Of Hillbilly John

Directed by the veteran John Newland, whose film-making career went right back to the '40s and the cult classic *T-Men*, financed by Tony Hope – one of Bob Hope's adopted – and produced by Barney Rosenzweig, who went to greater fame and fortune in the '80s with *Cagney & Lacey*, the genesis of the film is entertaining, as Hedge reveals. "Barney had been the producer for (cowboy TV series) *Daniel Boone* in the '60s and had been wanting to do this film for years. He was in this weekly poker group in Malibu that Tony also played in. For over a year, Barney talked at every game about how much he wanted to do this project and one night, out of frustration, Tony said, 'How much will it take to shut you up?' The price tag was one million, and Barney now had his executive producer!"

Based (admittedly fairly loosely) on stories by Manly Wade Wellman, a mid-century shudder-pulp luminary who used the folklore and superstition of southern Appalachia as raw material for his distinctive horror stories, the film tells of a travelling troubadour – John (played by Hedge) – transformed from the sharp, resourceful character of the post-Korean War '50s to a *faux naïf* post-flower-child hippie, building up to perform The Defy: a kind of MC battle against The Devil, aided and abetted by the magic of silver strings! There's plenty of local atmosphere and some eco-friendly concerns in the mix.

One of the industry's more unusual attempts to woo the hippie counterculture, the film did get a Hollywood screening and won several awards at various festivals. Hedge recalls that his biggest surprise was seeing superstar beauty Faye Dunaway turn up at a cast screening in Hollywood as a guest of Harris Yulin. "She sat right next to me, but without her make-up, I didn't realise who she was! She was rather plain and nothing like the way she looked on the big screen." After many legal battles over rights, the film was finally given a DVD and Bluray release in 2018.

A NURSERY RHYME, AN AXE, AND THE LONG ROAD

ALEXANDER 'SKIP' SPENCE's journey from the simple pleasures of his early days with Moby Grape to the making of cult outsider classic *Oar* was one littered with tragedy and confusion.

With eyewitness accounts from friends, family and band members, CAM COBB pieces together the startling story of the talented young artist as he went off the rails, became embroiled with a malevolent controlling force and ended up institutionalised. Yet through it all there was still the music

Skip Spence was a lightning bolt. He was a wild performer, and a wily, witty poet who wrote unconventional songs brimming with wordplay and innovation. He might've been in Quicksilver Messenger Service had he not been recruited into The Jefferson Airplane in September 1965. He could've stayed with the Airplane had he not been a let's-go-off-to-Mexico-on-a-whim-and-not-tell-anyone kind of free spirit. He's perhaps best known for co-founding Moby Grape, that stacked-with-talent collective that formed in the late summer of '66. As summer turned to autumn, his new bandmates started trekking up to his place in Corte Madera where new songs were introduced as toddlers Aaron and Adam sauntered around the second-floor flat.

Soon, the band's manager arranged for them to become mainstays at The Ark, a drydocked ferryboat-cum-club at Waldo Point Harbour in Sausalito. As Moby Grape premiered song after song and perfected their harmonies and arrangements, they became one of the tightest units in America, and the belle of the ball at the Fillmore and Avalon. For a time, San Francisco was the centre of the universe and Moby Grape was the city's most sought-after debutante. In the early weeks of 1967, three handsome suitors named Columbia, Atlantic, and Elektra were vying for the Grape's attention. Enamored with The Byrds, and the energy of producer/PR-man David Rubinson, the band signed with Columbia and cut their debut over a few days in March and April. The record, simply titled *Moby Grape*, came out in early June. Then mayhem took over.

Three members of the band (including Skip) were arrested on the night of an over-the-top album release party, and when Columbia released five singles on the same day, deejays cried foul. A couple of weeks later, Moby Grape's white-hot set at The Monterey International Pop Festival was banished from the album and soon-to-be classic film when their manager laid out his astronomical fee structure to festival organisers. Not long after that the Grape nearly came to blows with The Buckinghams in a scheduling conflict at a gig in Cleveland. Headliners The Mamas & the Papas weren't amused, and Moby Grape was unceremoniously kicked off the tour. After a summer of touring headaches, and lingering questions about contracts and payments, the Grape gave their manager his walking papers in September. For a short while everyone laid low then everything kicked back into gear in November as the musicians trekked to NYC for a batch of gigs and studio sessions. It took them three extended recording blocks to finish their second album and by the time *WOW* came out in April '68 Moby Grape had a new sort of pest to deal with.

Fuming over his dismissal, ex-manager Matthew Katz slapped together a copycat Moby Grape and sent them out on tour,

It was a tragedy for everyone, that someone so talented could have everything turn around in the blink of an eye." Skip Spence, on stage with Moby Grape June 1967

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERRY FERREIRA

Skip's wedding, 15th March 1964, with his friend Billy Dean Anders and Billy's mum

Behind the kit with Jefferson Airplane, summer 1966. L-R: Paul Kantner, Jorma Kaukonen, Spence, Marty Balin, Jack Casady, Signe Toly Anderson

"Skip disappeared the night he met Joanna Wells... he didn't come back that night and he didn't show up for a couple of sessions at least"

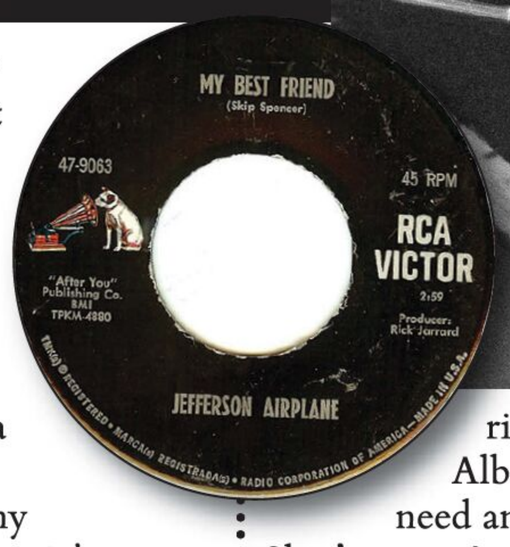
TIM DELLARA

just as the real band was trying to promote their new record. Then, in May, the Grape (the real Moby Grape) zigzagged back and forth from coast to coast and top to bottom of America amid a barrage of equipment and transportation catastrophes. As the summer approached, guitarist Peter Lewis took off on another self-imposed timeout as the rest of the group holed up at the Albert hotel in Manhattan for a run of shows and batch of recording sessions as they chipped away at their third album. It was on one of those nights in early June '68 that Skip Spence's life took a sharp turn.

It was smoky inside the club. Smoky and loud. The space was so small and packed most of the people on the dancefloor were dripping with sweat. Of course, it was June, and New York was getting hotter by the day. The show had just gotten started and from his vantage point at the side of the stage the young man could see the musicians. There'd been some trouble with some of their equipment at recent shows, but this Long Island venue was providing all the PA tonight and things were going alright. Thank God for that.

When the opener ended and Moby Grape jumped into their second song, the man remembered the strange note. He reached down and pulled a scrap piece of paper out of his pocket and glanced at it for a second time. The paper was small and there wasn't much written on it. It was dark at the side of the stage, so he held the note up closer to reread what it said. It was handwritten and the text was legible but the signature at the bottom looked like chicken scratch. Still, he could just make out the name.

Glancing over the words, the man scowled. The note wasn't worrying or threatening in any way – but it didn't sit right. He couldn't put his finger on it. Something was off. With just three lines, the message read like a nursery rhyme. It just didn't make any sense. "*skip spence, skip spence, sittin' on a fence, which way you gonna go?*" It meant something, of course, just not to him. He looked at the stage again and glanced at the members of the band, looking from one to another. Skippy was his usual self, mugging around like a wind-up poet on rhythm guitar. He'd been playing his Rickenbacker at gigs lately. A few months ago, it was his Strat. The man kept his eyes on Skip for a moment then he looked back down at the note.



Maybe Skip could tell him what it meant, he thought to himself. After all, the woman who handed him the note – someone named Joanna Wells – asked him to pass it to Skip Spence just before the show. She'd handed it to him as he was arranging things in the small backstage area. It was such a strange message. The man read the note for a third time. It was still off-putting, he thought.

What did it mean? Was it an invitation? A challenge? Something else?

The young man folded up the paper and put it back in his pocket. He made a mental note to remember to give it to Skip after the show, after he got the payment for the gig from Skinny Frankie. He didn't look forward to that meeting. Frankie was someone you didn't want to mess with, or at least that's the vibe he gave. Of course, as the band's road manager, dealing with dodgy characters at venues was part and parcel of the job. Sometimes, rustling up payment for a gig was an exercise of brinksmanship mixed with a healthy dose of *détente* and a quick game of who's going to blink first.

Tim Dellara's chores as road manager ran the full gamut. And one of those chores tonight was to hand Skip that strange little note from Joanna Wells… before the band trekked back across the river, back to The Hotel Albert. But, as it was, he didn't need any prompts to remember Skip's note. As the night wore on, and Dellara watched the show, and the PA and equipment worked out just fine, his mind wandered back to that strange nursery rhyme message. The woman who'd given him the paper had long dark hair, was thin, and plainly dressed. There was something that bothered him about the whole thing.

This all happened one night in early June '68. It was the moment where Skip Spence stood at a fork in the road, with one path pointing to more Moby Grape madness, and the other pointing to, well, something unknown.

"From my memory," Dellara shares, "Skip disappeared the night he met Joanna Wells… he didn't come back that night and he didn't come back for at least a couple more nights. Skippy wasn't around and he didn't show up for a couple of sessions at least…"

"I wondered what Skippy was doing when he'd moved out of the hotel," drummer Don Stevenson says. "We'd had some rehearsals, and he didn't get to them. He wasn't really in the band at that point. So, I called him and asked him what he was doing and what he was up to, and he told me he'd moved to the Village with this woman."

"So, he gave me his address and I went over to visit… I had some tea with him and sat there talking with him. There was an old man lying on the couch and Skip and Joanna called him Father. Skip was staying stuff like, 'We talked to our father, and I'm not supposed to be playing in a band anymore.' And Joanna would say stuff like, 'We're gonna move forward and do all this new material, isn't that right, Skippy?' And Skippy would just say, 'Yeah, I'm not supposed to be playing in a band anymore.' So, he wanted to do his

Moby Grape ham it up for a summer 1967 promo photo. L-R: Jerry Miller, Peter Lewis (back), Skip Spence (front), Don Stevenson, Bob Mosley; Spence's 'Omaha' leads the Grape's ill-fated five-single attack

own music… or she wanted him to do his own music."

Thinking back, Dellara adds, "Don went to talk to him and then came back really dispirited. Skip, apparently, was talking about starting up a new band called The Cows, and he wanted to go to England and get Eric Clapton and someone else to join the band… he wanted Don to sing in the band, and not play drums anymore. That was Skip's plan – and Joanna had complete control over Skip."

In a matter of days, two incidents sparked a chain reaction that had long reaching consequences for both Moby Grape and Skip Spence.

After that night on Long Island, the young guitarist and Joanna Wells were joined at the hip. And one day, they found themselves in Art Director Bob Cato's office at Columbia in Upper Manhattan. At one point, Spence asked Mosley to join him in leaving Moby Grape and forming a new band. When Mosley refused to join if Wells was involved, she promptly hit him in the face and when she snatched a pair of scissors and lunged for Cato the bassist had to restrain her. Tim Dellara was in the room at the time and along with Mosley and Cato he was shaken by what happened.

A few days later, Skip reappeared at the Albert hotel. Entering the building, he raced up to Dellara's room and banged on door. When Dellara opened it, he was taken aback by what he saw. Spence was wearing a black leather jacket without a shirt on. He was sweating profusely and had a cross around his neck. His eyes were darting around and clutched in one of his hands was a fire axe. Their exchange went something like this…

"Where's Don?" Spence asked.

"In his room," Dellara replied (knowing full well that Stevenson and Miller were at a session at the studio).

"What number's his room?" Spence asked.

Dellara gave the number and Spence stormed off.

Moments later, Spence tried to chop his way through Stevenson's door and when he didn't find him, he raced uptown to the studio.

Tim Dellara, meanwhile, called ahead to warn everyone.

"We were in the CBS offices," manager Michael Gruber says. "It was the same building as the recording studio on [West] Fifty-Seventh Street. He got into the offices and one thing led to another and I don't know who called me, but I came running. I was looking through the glass and Skip was freaking out. I went into the office to calm him down… I don't know if he was tripping or what."

"We had a meeting later that night… maybe the next day," Dellara recalls. "I don't know what happened with Don and Jerry because they couldn't go back to their old room because the door was chopped open. But I remember we had a meeting with Gruber and Arnie [Gruber's assistant] and Rubinson and Mosley, and Jerry and Don and me.

"They all started talking about what to do," Dellara continues. "And I don't know if Skip had already been arrested at that time, or not, but Rubinson and Gruber were saying that we need to go down and file a criminal complaint – otherwise, Skippy will be out in the street and he'll get hurt. Somebody could shoot him. If he's running around like he was, a cop could shoot him. And that's why, as I recall, Jerry and Don went down and signed a complaint."

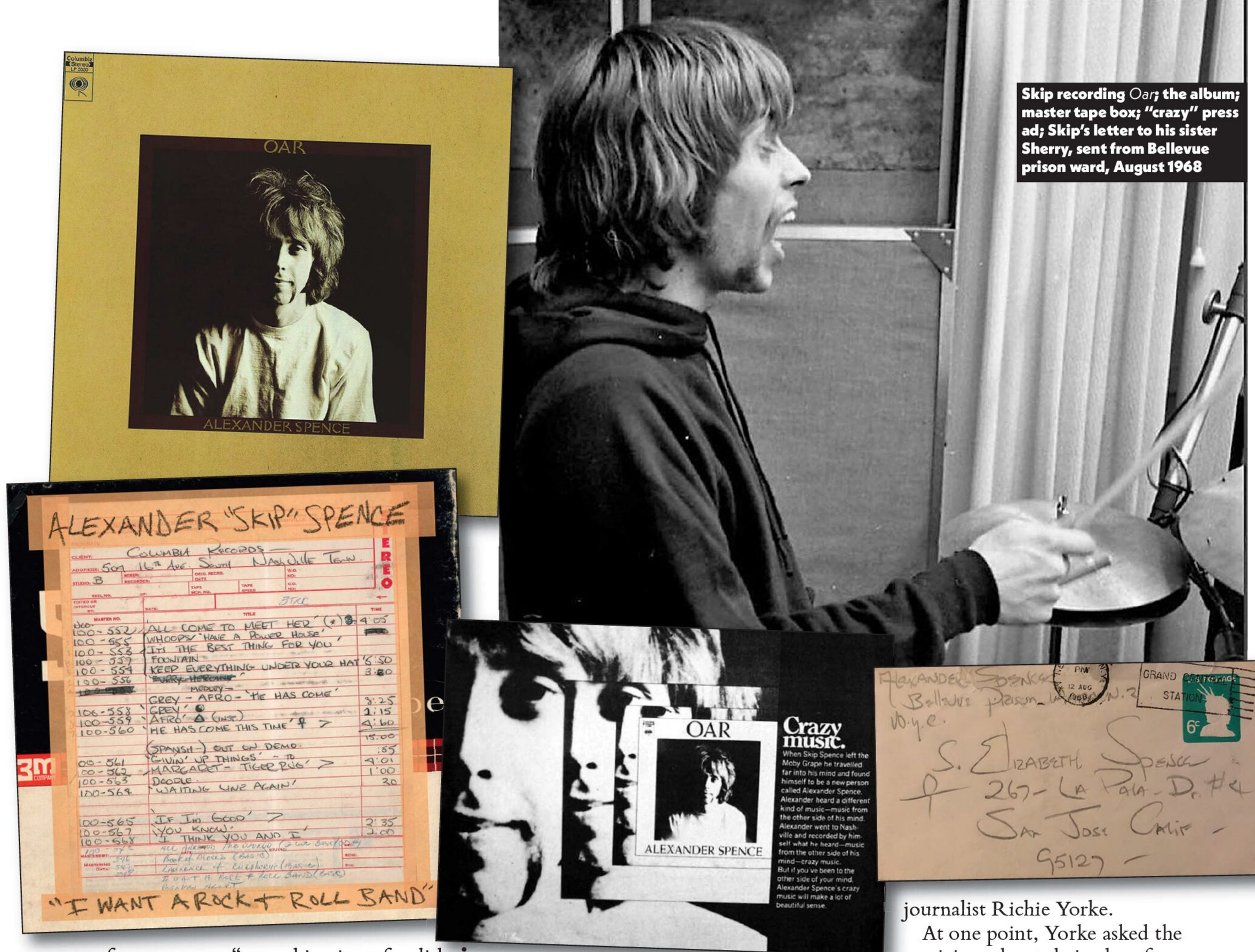
Speaking with *Crawdaddy!* David Rubinson said, "Don and Jerry had to come over [and] swear out complaints, because there was no way we were going to get him clean or dry or down and get this shit out of his system. We didn't know what to do, maybe we fucked it up. I didn't know anything about drugs, I have to admit it. But talking to him and seeing him… his eyes were like one-arm bandits."

Initially booked into The Tombs, Spence was soon transferred to Bellevue Hospital. No one expected that.

"I was worried when the whole thing happened," Mosley sighs. "I didn't talk to David [Rubinson] about it. Don and Jerry and I took a plane back west. We hauled butt back to Santa Cruz. We almost stopped the band at that point. We didn't know what to do."

Ironically, in the middle of all the chaos, Moby Grape's new album, *WOW*, hit its peak reaching #20 on *Billboard* on 15th June '68.

Near the end of the month, Moby Grape was back in New York for a gig in Central Park, at The Schaefer Music Festival. In a syndicated review, Richard Robinson lamented that the band's



Skip recording *Oar*; the album; master tape box; "crazy" press ad; Skip's letter to his sister Sherry, sent from Bellevue prison ward, August 1968

performance was "a combination of polish and complete sloppiness". Noting Spence's absence, he added, "Skip is reported to be resting and unable to play with the group."

What Robinson couldn't have known was that Skip Spence was locked up just a few miles away from Central Park at Bellevue Hospital.

Starting off as a simple evaluation, Spence's stay kept getting extended. And as the days and weeks drifted into one another, the offbeat musician got into a routine.

In late July, Skip's old band, Jefferson Airplane, breezed into Manhattan for a weekend at The Fillmore East. By that point, they'd become mainstays on the chart, having reached #3 on *Billboard* with *Surrealistic Pillow* and #17 with their third album, *After Bathing At Baxter's*. During his time in the city, guitarist Jorma Kaukonen (who knew Skip from their days of playing folk clubs in the South Bay in the early '60s) paid a visit to his old friend.

"When I saw him, he was like our Skip," Kaukonen muses. "He didn't seem like the kind of person who should be in an institution."

By that point, Spence had been in Bellevue Hospital for about a month. He had another four to go. Soon, he'd drop his nickname and go back to his legal given name, Alexander.

In the second week of August, the 22-year-old sent a cryptic letter to his younger sister, Sherry. Written on a torn sheet of lined paper, the note reads, "Dear Sherry, or Really, Elizabeth, Thank You So much. Tis my Heart Not Hand That's Broken but My Mind has healed it – Love, and Gratitude. A." On the flipside of the paper is a stamp at the middle of the page, right by the tear mark. The stamp simply reads: "CENSORED" in all upper-case letters. Below the stamp is an additional note, which reads: "Inclosed [sic] is my creation, read it light, It speaks for me – Bless you – Alexander." In the upper left corner of the envelope, which was dated 12th August '68, Spence wrote out his mailing address. It reads, "Alexander Spence, Bellevue Prison Ward N 2, NYC."

Over five decades later Sherry still wonders what her brother was trying to tell her in that letter. Thinking back, she says, "The whole incident was horrifying. It was the worst thing ever. It was a tragedy for everyone – for my brother, his family, our mom." Sighing, she adds, "That someone so talented could have everything turn around in the blink of an eye, it was devastating."

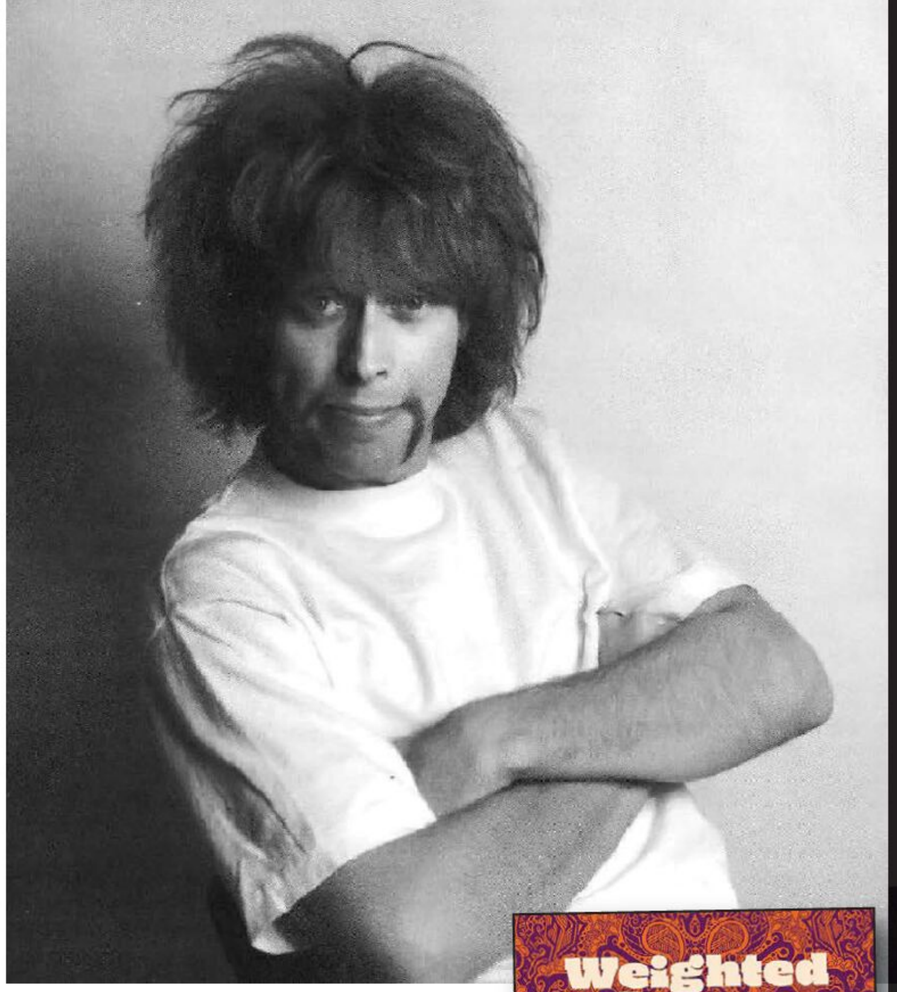
As the summer wore on, Moby Grape pushed forward, performing close to home (in San Francisco), up and down the West Coast (down in San Diego and up in Seattle), and across Canada (in Vancouver and Toronto). While playing at the Time Being event at Toronto's CNE fairgrounds, the band chatted with journalist Richie Yorke.

At one point, Yorke asked the musicians about their plans for a new album. It was a bit of a sore point. When Spence had his breakdown and got locked up in Bellevue, Moby Grape had stockpiled nearly 10 songs for their follow up to *WOW*. Most had been demoed and a few were ready to go.

From Mosley, there was 'It's A Beautiful Day Today', 'Soul Stew', and 'Cockatoo Blues' (later retitled 'Tongue Tied', written by Jerry and Bob). Lewis had recorded a solo acoustic version of 'If You Can't Learn From My Mistakes' and he also had a few older songs available. From the Miller-Stevenson duo there were two new songs the pair had written while touring in Texas in May, including 'Ooh Mama Ooh' and a song they called simply 'Texas' (it was later retitled 'Big'). Spence too had a few holdovers on hand, including the infectious 'You Can Do Anything' and the penetrating 'Seeing' (rejigged with Mosley's vocals added in April).

With all those songs on hand, Moby Grape had already laid the groundwork for their third LP when Spence went AWOL in mid-June. But as the newly reconfigured Moby Grape assessed their situation in August, all those demos and recordings were shelved, and a new album was a question mark.

"We're playing it by ear," Peter Lewis told Yorke. "We'll go back to Los Angeles after this gig and work more on it. But unless we get our own thing together, there isn't going to be another album.



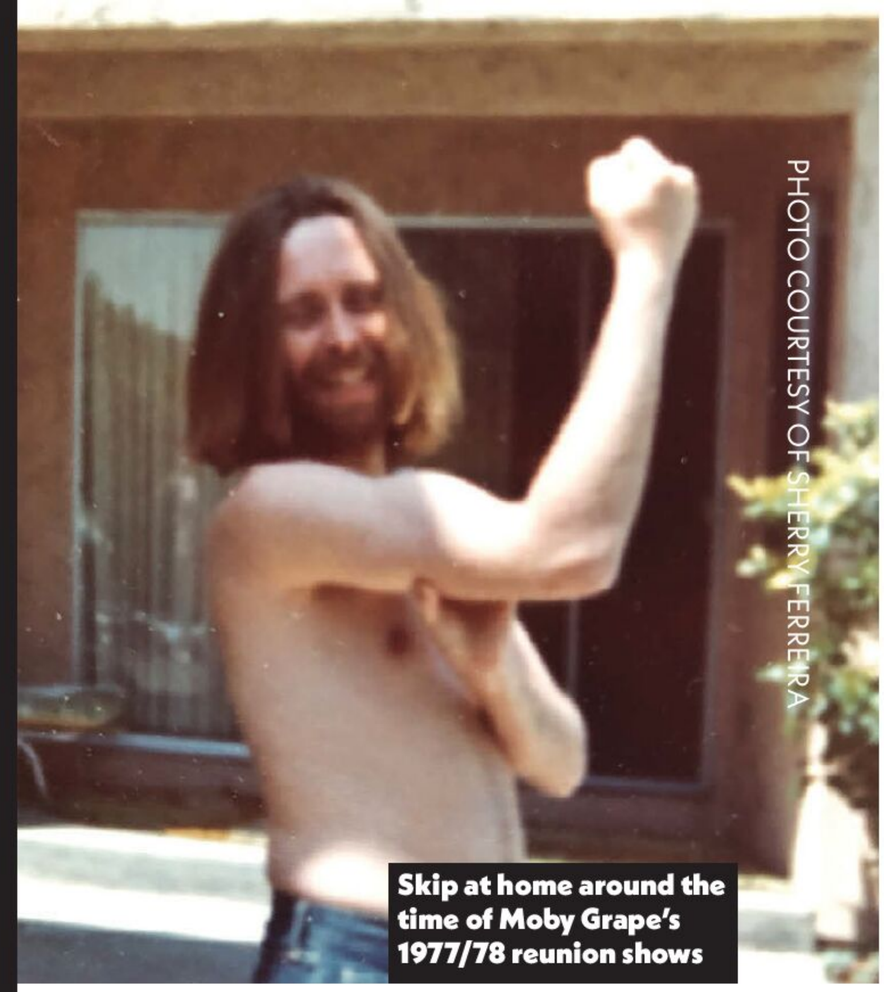
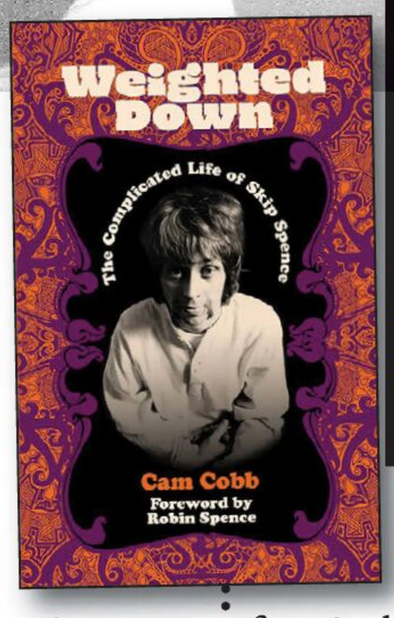


PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERRY FERREIRA

Skip at home around the time of Moby Grape's 1977/78 reunion shows

"We didn't know what to do, maybe we fucked it up. I didn't know anything about drugs, but talking to him and seeing him... his eyes were like one-arm bandits"

DAVE RUBINSON



Nobody is going to release anything anymore until we've decided that it represents us properly."

That was published in *The Globe & Mail* on 16th August '68. But in truth, it wouldn't be long before the four remaining members of Moby Grape would start writing new material. And sometime during the summer and autumn, Spence himself would return to songwriting. Perhaps it was therapeutic for him.

Of course, Skip Spence had been writing for years by that point both in the Jefferson Airplane and Moby Grape and even before. When the Grape formed and put together their first album, he had three songs on offer. The electrifying 'Rounder' was only recorded as an instrumental for some reason and was ultimately shelved. Spence's other two songs, however, 'Omaha' and 'Indifference', shone like beacons on a superlative record. That was in late '66 and early '67. Then, a few months after The Summer Of Love, he offered two more songs ('Seeing' and 'You Can Do Anything') for the band's second LP. Although they were strong, very strong, both were shelved as the album came into focus. Of course, Spence himself might've passed over those songs when he brought three entirely new ones to the group's last burst of sessions in January/February '68. They were all production numbers with tongue-in-cheek lyrics and offbeat styles. 'Funky Tunk' was a country music spoof with a sped-up voice, 'Motorcycle Irene' offered car crash sound effects and a gender-reversal 'Leader Of The Pack'-type tale, and 'Just Like Gene Autry' (a Foxtrot) parodied old crooner-style numbers, complete with an over-the-top intro delivered by none other than Arthur Godfrey and faux live sound effects giving listeners the vibe of sitting in a '40s lounge.

Writing in Bellevue in the summer and autumn of '68, Spence continued down his happy-go-lucky path, writing quirky tales of spiritualism and lustful groupies (think' Dixie Peach Promenade (Yin For Yang)' and 'Lawrence Of Euphoria'). No matter what demons or nightmares he was dealing with during those months, he was still able to have fun. And he was hopeful too, which shines through in 'Little Hands', a song later covered by Robert Plant.

Spence had a rootsy C&W/bluesy side as well, which surfaced on songs like 'Books Of Moses' and 'Cripple Creek'. But his new songs also dove into the depths of his fears and his pain. Taking stock of his situation, he penned dark, penetrating songs of distress and sorrow, like 'Broken Heart' and 'Weighted Down (The Prison Song)'. His songwriting ran the full gamut. And it isn't surprising that the songs would later attract a cadre of talented artists to cover them; talent that includes such names as Beck, Tom Waits, Robyn Hitchcock, and Mudhoney.

As Spence was sketching out his new material and getting ready for his release, Moby Grape was pushing on. Everyone had new material on hand and a batch of sessions was booked for November. By the end of October, the Grape had played about three dozen shows without Skip. But as Halloween came and went, disaster struck. Still fuming over his dismissal, and claiming ownership to the band's name, Matthew Katz sued Moby Grape for a cool million dollars. It was a legal skirmish that would expand like a Red Giant, enduring for decades (lasting well beyond Spence's untimely passing in the spring of '99).

As November '68 wore on, the Spence-less Grape flew back down to LA for their recording sessions. In a burst of energy, they cut 10 tracks in just nine studio days. In part, their return to the studio was a matter of accepting the fact that Skip Spence was not coming back. Not to Moby Grape.

"At that point I was under the care of a psychiatrist," Lewis later told *Ptolemaic Terrascope*, "taking all this Librium so I could stay with the band. We kept drifting along as a quartet. We made *Moby Grape '69* in an attempt to rebound from the *WOW* album, which was overproduced. And it's a cool album. Although we could have rehearsed it a little more, we still believed in it. But I think we were waiting for Skippy to come back and he never did."

Around the time of the Grape's November sessions, Skip Spence walked out of Bellevue Hospital. He had stacks of paper under his arm and dozens of new melodies in his head. After meeting with producer David Rubinson in a swanky Manhattan hotel, he got money from Columbia to buy a motorcycle and drove it across America, all the way back home to his family in Boulder Creek.

Skip Spence had a plan. "He asked me if I was going or staying," Spence's ex-wife Pat remembers. "And I said, 'I'm coming.' So, we packed up everything we could. We couldn't take everything, but we took clothes, and we got I-Ching, the cat that we had, and we rented a U-Haul van."

For over 35 hours the family sped eastward, circuiting all the way to Nashville, Tennessee. There, in a couple of weeks, working closely with an engineer in a makeshift studio space provided by Columbia, Spence recorded songs he'd written during his months of contemplation and despair while confined to Bellevue Hospital and thousands of miles removed from his wife and kids. In those fleeting December sessions, as he got to know his family once again, he'd record every instrument on every track. What we got in the end was a quirky, dark, witty, always honest album; Skip Spence's magnum opus: *Oar*.

Cam Cobb would like to thank Tim Dellara, Sherry Ferreira, Michael Gruber, Jorma Kaukonen, Jerry Miller, Bob Mosley, Trish Perez (formerly Pat Spence), Aaron, Omar, and Robin Spence, Gordon Stevens, and Don Stevenson

Weighted Down: The Complicated Life Of Skip Spence by Cam Cobb is published by Omnibus Press in April

reviews then

Reissues, anthologies and compilations

Surrender To The Rhythm

PETER GALLAGHER hears country, blues, powerpop and world music from a band that almost had what it took

BRINSLEY SCHWARZ

Thinking Back: The Anthology 1970-1975

★★★★

LEMON RECORDINGS 7-CD BOX SET

Eggs Over Easy got there first but Brinsley Schwarz are surely the quintessential pub-rockers, even if their Camden country was far removed from the perspiration-soaked R&B usually associated with the scene. Evolving out of frilly-shirted poppets Kippington Lodge, the band initially comprised Brinsley Schwarz (guitar), Nick Lowe (bass), Bob Andrews (keyboards) and Billy Rankin (drums). Ian Gomm (guitar) would climb aboard for album three, and it's he who supplies this set's liner notes. This box contains Brinsley's seven studio albums plus a wealth of bonus material, including a slew of live songs, cover versions, alternate takes, a 45 released under the alias of Limelight, and a song credited to The Hitters.

A love for The Band permeates the first three albums and is first apparent on 'Hymn To Me', the opener of 1970's eponymous debut. 'Lady Constant' reveals CSNY as another influence, if one assumes the Y stands, surprisingly, for Yes. All in all, this is a solid debut.

'Country Girl' on *Despite It All* continues the Band/CSN homaging, with Andrews coming over all Garth Hudson, and the fiddle just completes the allusion. 'Piece Of Home' evokes that time when Keith was hanging out with Gram, with Nick Lowe doing a passable Mick. Another classy album.

Silver Pistol contains a clutch of Lowe classics, not least the title track and the lovely 'Egypt', but with the arrival of Gomm there's a new songwriter in town, and he's no slouch. In fact, the bonus tracks reveal a third talented tunesmith in Andrews, but bafflingly his contributions were overlooked on the finished album in favour of two ill-fitting pre-Redbone songs by Pat and Lolly Vegas.

Nervous On The Road (not the live album its title suggests) finds the band shedding the country trappings, but Gomm and Andrews' songwriting credits are greatly reduced and too many of Lowe's are drearier than a late-night bus station, Thankfully the soulful 'Don't Lose Your Grip On Love', the exuberant 'Why, Why, Why, Why, Why', and the breezily supreme 'Surrender To The Rhythm' come to the rescue.

Please Don't Ever Change sees the band doing exactly that, but 'Why Do We Hurt The One We Love?' is as convincingly Caribbean as Lilt's totally tropical taste, and the cod-reggae of Heptones cover 'Hypocrite' and the mariachi-flecked 'Down In Mexico' fare just as poorly. The standard early '70s road-record-road-record schedule takes its toll on quality control.

The New Favourites Of Brinsley Schwarz brings a powerpop approach, especially on their best-known song '(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love And Understanding'. 'Ever Since You're Gone' is a sweet soul number, while 'Down In The Dive' demonstrates there is still room for some good ol' Nashville honky-tonk.

It's All Over Now, recorded in '75 but posthumously released 13 years later, has some more powerpop in 'Cruel To Be Kind', a future solo hit for Nick in '79. 'God Bless (Whoever Made You)' sounds like The Bay City Rollers covering The Chi-Lites. Had the Rollers released such a thing it would probably have topped the charts, but teenage girls weren't buying the Brinsleys, and neither was anybody else, and the cover versions shoring up half this album suggests the band members were all eyeing new careers.

Englishmen playing country sadly had no place in a musical landscape dominated by prog lords and glitter gurus but despite some flagging towards the end, this box serves as a timely reminder of how incendiary Brinsley Schwarz could be. Fifty years gone they may be, but what a great way to salute a band that fully deserves its place in British rock history.

"'Piece Of Home' evokes that time when Keith was hanging out with Gram, with Nick Lowe doing a passable Mick"

Andrews, Lowe, Gomm, Schwarz and Rankin

KAY ADAMS
Little Pink Mack
★★★★

SUNDAZED CD / LP

Featuring Princetta Kay Adams' unreleased live performances from *Buck Owens' Ranch Show,* this collection is a treasure trove of old-style country, before the Nashville Music Row producers decided to drench their female artists recordings in cloying, saccharine strings.

With a voice that brings to mind Wanda Jackson and a selection of songs that could reduce a roadhouse audience to tears before making them dance the soles off of their shoes, the usual themes of heartache and unfaithfulness are to the fore, but Kay's voice makes you believe every syllable. Her duets with Dick Curless are a delight, her ringing tones contrast with his deep bass boom and backing musicians The Buck Owens Band bring that authentic Bakersfield sound to the proceedings with some breath-taking pedal steel and Telecaster twang. Kay was also an advocate of breaking down gender stereotypes in country music and the title track satisfyingly puts her behind the wheel of a bijou big rig in her "truck drivin' boots"!

Henry Hutton

THE AMBOY DUKES
The Amboy Dukes
★★★★

SUNDAZED LP

Well, you've heard their feral, menacing cover of 'Baby Please Don't Go' on about 12 different reissues of *Nuggets*. So you already know – like it or not – that, once upon a time, there was a really good reason for Ted Nugent to be walking the Earth with the rest of us.

And there's nothing on here that will change your mind about that. This debut LP, like the two that followed it, is a ferocious stew of Detroit proto-metal, harmony-pop, mushroom-festooned psychedelia, and R&B-flavoured rock. Nugent is a wild man, Steve Farmer is a songwriter extraordinaire, and John Drake is a howling-mad blues man in the early Burdon mode. There's the occasional sitar too. History has not really afforded these guys their due, and it's about time we did.

This new reissue is from the original master tapes and sounds better than anything since the original LP. It's on bright green splattered vinyl, for some reason. The other colours are on the inside.

Mike Fornatale

CAN
Live In Paris 1973
★★★★★

MUTE/FUTURE DAYS CD/LP

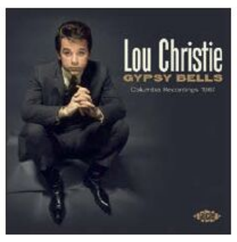
Mute Records' amazing series of live performances by krautrock kings Can continues to bear wonderful kosmische fruit, this time kicking off its "second phase" with a pivotal performance at Paris's L'Olympia in 1973. Here, we find the band truly at the peak of their powers, performing off the back of the now seminal *Tago Mago* and the (then) recently released *Ege Bayamsi.*

Featuring probably what's considered to be their classic line-up, it's the first of the *Live* series on which vocalist Damo Suzuki appears. The album draws largely from *Ege Bayamsi* with tracks including 'Spoon' and 'Vitamin C' sounding particularly majestic. But as any fan knows, no two Can performances are the same with the band improvising around the main riff of a song to produce a truly hypnotic and novel experience steered by four master musicians. Compiled from vault archives and recordings sent in by eyewitness fans, this is a must.

Sarah Gregory

LOU CHRISTIE
Gypsy Bells: Columbia Recordings 1967
★★★★★

ACE CD



No one makes music like Lou Christie, a man whose distinctive formula located the musical G-spot and delivered pop ecstacy. No big hits here though, for this archival release covers the mere 15 months he spent signed to Columbia in 1967-68, during which time three singles were released, included here, plus an unreleased 15 tracks, presumably for an album that never came to fruition.

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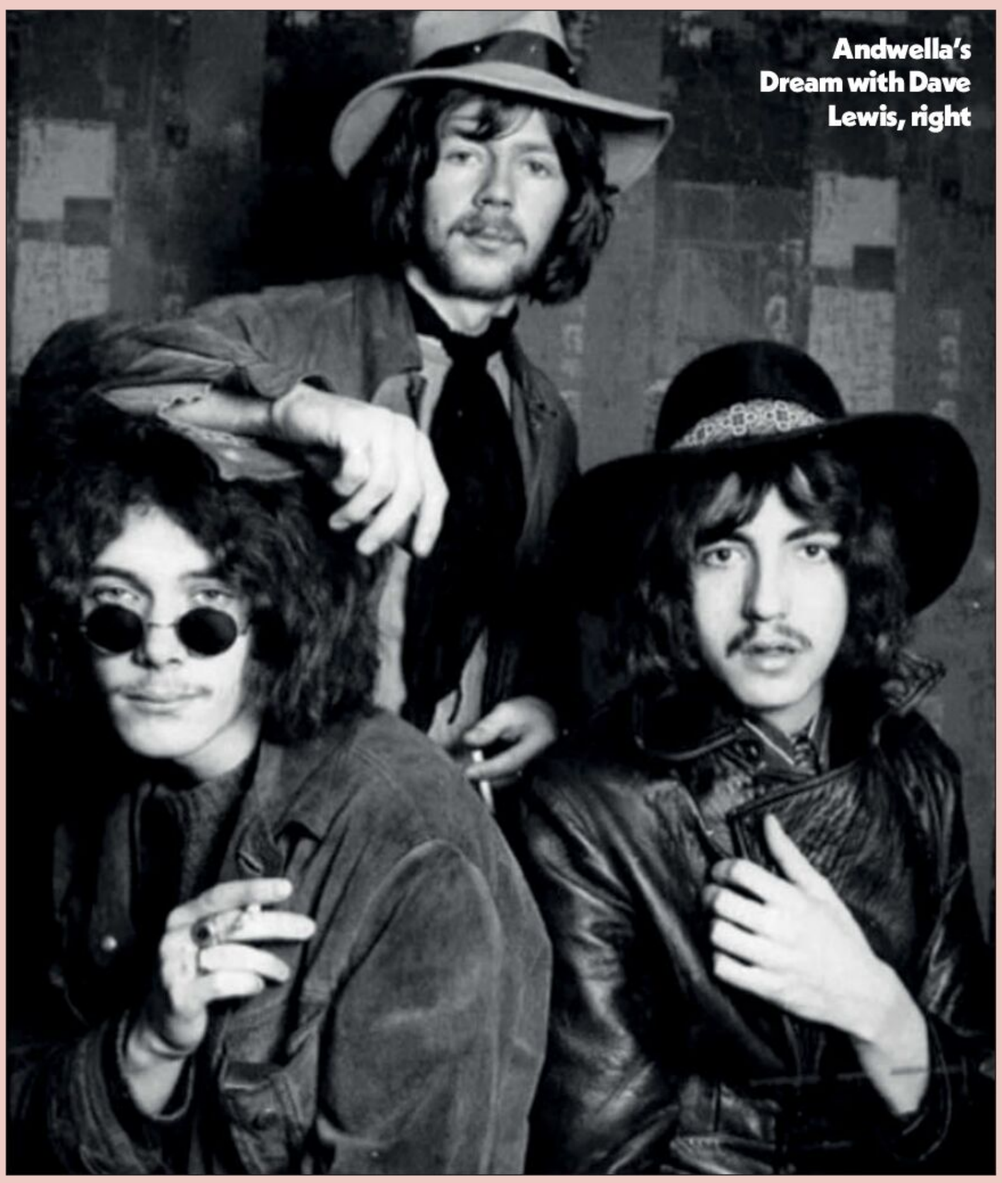


Andwella's Dream with Dave Lewis, right

Poetry Corner

ANDWELLA
To Dream
★★★★

NUMERO GROUP 3-LP BOX SET

Well, it might seem odd for a four-star review of a deluxe "complete works" box set to begin with the advisory "your mileage may vary", but in this case it well may. The potential issue isn't one of quality, though, but one of style.

The Andwella story begins in Belfast. Young guitarist/singer Dave Lewis quickly hooked up with a band called The Method, which soon shrunk in personnel to become a power trio. Off to Dublin from there; and, by 1968, to London with a brand-new set of hire-purchase Marshall stacks. A season of playing cover songs, opening for the likes of The Nice and young upstarts Jethro Tull and then the odd twist of a summer-long gig in Jersey. Off to Heathrow! They remained in that closed-loop environment long enough to emerge, newly formed, as Andwella's Dream. Back to London and scooped up immediately by the new up-and-coming Reflection Records, they quickly found themselves in the studio, with the engineers staring bemusedly at their Marshall stacks.

The resulting *Love And Poetry* is a masterpiece; and far from the monochromatic skronk-fest that those engineers must have expected. Its textures keep unfolding as you listen, and one marvels at how many of them there are. There are a lot of touchstones here. You'll hear mid-period Beatles, Cream, The Who, *SF Sorrow*-era Pretty Things, and a very healthy helping of the early blueprint of Traffic and Procol Harum. Good enough? Taken on its own, *Love And Poetry* easily falls into the five-star category. And, as you might imagine (since you do not own a copy and neither do I) it inexplicably did not sell.

Predictably, the band splintered, and the newly renamed Andwella was now Dave Lewis' baby. Second LP *World's End* is quite good as well, with a jazzier bent in places; but Mr Lewis, like so many others, had fallen under the spell of Robbie Robertson and The Band. By the time of third and final LP *People's People* that's pretty much what you get. Competent, thumbs-up Robertson, early Elton/Bernie, and much-better-than-journeyman-level singer-songwriter exercises. It's all good; some of it is even great. (The fact that these two LPs only drag this review's rating down to four stars is testament to that.) It's just, well, not *Love And Poetry.*

Mike Fornatale

Sandie Shaw. A natural on TV and radio

Live And Kicking

GEORGIE FAME
Rhythm & Blues At The Ricky Tick, May & October 1965
★★★★

MC5
Live In Europe 1972
★★★

MOTT THE HOOPLE
TV & Radio 1971
★★★

NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE
Cowgirl In The Sand Live 1970
★★★

SANDIE SHAW
On Radio & TV 1965-1970
★★★★

ALL 1960S LPS

The unofficial live album has come a long way since *Shindig!*'s teenage years when merry afternoons were spent down Kensington Market rummaging through stalls for recordings of unknown provenance compiling amateurly recorded shows from artists of all stripes. Today, the 1960s label and its assorted subsidiaries press up all manner of live albums in handsomely mounted flipback sleeves, culled from (one assumes public domain) gigs, radio sessions and TV appearances, five of which are covered here.

Organ maestro Georgie Fame's entry captures two swinging sets at The Ricky Tick in 1965. Fidelity is surprisingly good, Fame's backing band are on fire, and there's very little overlap in material between the two gigs, meaning Fame standards like 'Yeh Yeh' and 'Eso Beso' only get one look in each. Terrific.

Recently departed guitar god Wayne Kramer is at his blistering best on the first side of MC5's offering, which sees the band on German TV's *Beat Club* (as debut LP *Kick Out The Jams* attests, they were always more of a live act than a studio one). The flip is a curio: a live session recorded for Finnish TV after singer Rob Tyner and drummer Dennis Thompson had quit the band. The almost MC5 acquit themselves pretty well, but it's really one for completists.

The Mott The Hoople title gathers up sessions from the likes of *Top Gear*, *John Peel Sunday Concert* and *Sound Of The Seventies*. Sonic quality varies immensely and at times the band don't even sound like they can hear each other – Mott never recorded Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone' for an album, but it's just as well as the nine-minute live version here is an absolute slog.

Again, sonic quality varies on the Neil Young & Crazy Horse set which hears them live in Boston and Santa Monica. It's fascinating to hear Crazy Horse let loose on 'Cinammon Girl' but the Santa Monica version of 'Cowgirl In The Sand' is horribly muddy, and again truly only for the über-fan.

Finally, Sandie Shaw, with great sounding cuts from *Top Gear*, *Shindig!*, *The Sandie Shaw Supplement* and, um, The Bratislava International Festival Of Pop. Shaw runs through a selection of hits and covers like a fab brass-heavy cover of 'Day Tripper'/'Ticket To Ride'.

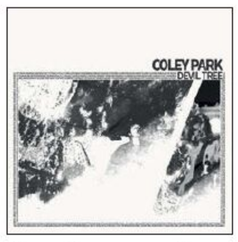
Thomas Patterson

With a few judicious covers in the mix (Jobim, Bacharach & David), it's primarily Lou and Twyla Herbert compositions, arranged by Charles Calello with his trademark female backing vocal trio. The results are stunning. The immense 'Holding On For Dear Love' should have been a worldwide floor-filler and, if you appreciate the magnificence of 'Lightnin' Strikes', prime yourself for 'Yellow Lights Say', 'Don't Stop Me' (a prototype 'She Sold Me Magic') and 'Gypsy Bells', the smouldering soul of 'Paper And Paste' and the cabaret crooning of 'Escape'. Absolute solid gold.

Vic Templar

COLEY PARK
DEVIL TREE
★★★★

BIG POTATO LP



Hailing from Reading circa 2002, Coley Park is a fine example of a band taking the tropes of classic American music and twisting them into new shapes. Near contemporaries of Beachwood Sparks, they share a similarly rough-hewn quality and approach to country-flecked indie-rock, the end result feeling akin to Gram Parsons' original iteration of the Burrito Brothers being reignited by the wizards of '90s lo-fi (notably Guided By Voices and the Elephant Six collective).

Production on this, the second of three Coley Park albums, was handled by Slowdive's Neil Halstead, himself heading into similar territory at this time with Mojave Three. It's a mark of its excellence that the album feels live and uncluttered, while holding constant interest, and with its psychedelic influences worn defiantly on its sleeve, there's a lovely insidious quality to songs like 'Scared Of Heights'.

Ben Phillipson

THE DOORS
Alive She Cried
★★★★

RHINO LP

Probably the best of the three Doors live albums released during the LP era (all of which were combined on 1991's *In Concert* CD), *Alive She Cried* is exhumed after 41 years on lizard-green vinyl and still sounds great.

Opening with a definitively sleazy reading of schoolgirl-bothering garage anthem 'Gloria' and including a brisk but lengthy 'Light My Fire' alongside R&B vamp 'You Make Me Real', this is The Doors as bluesy showband and only incidentally as backdoor shamans. True, Morrison pulls off the magnificently portentous guff of 'Texas Radio & The Big Beat' before segueing into the earthier groove of 'Love Me Two Times' on the set of a Danish TV show. But with John Sebastian shadowing the barking singer on harmonica on a lubricious 'Little Red Rooster', this simulation of a Doors show presents the band at their most on-the-sofa listenable – though arguably at their least challenging.

Ben Graham

THE FIVE DAY WEEK STRAW PEOPLE
The Five Day Week Straw People
★★★

MORGAN BLUE TOWN LP

An established favourite among fans of third-tier post-Swinging London British underground LPs, The FDWSP's sole outing was conceived by budding songwriters David Montague and Guy Mascolo (soon to achieve immortality as co-founder of hairdressing chain Toni & Guy) and recorded during one afternoon in an empty London school hall with the instrumental support of John DuCann and Mike Hawksworth of Andromeda, and future Thunderclap Newman/Andwella drummer Jack McCulloch for London no-budget label Saga (see also *This Is The Magic Mixture*).

A concept album about normal folk and the highs and lows of the working week, *TFDWSP* suffers from uniformly average singing and songwriting. Given the mercurial nature of the recording, audio fidelity is surprisingly good, while the musicians turn in occasionally inspired and texturally adventurous sounds. (McCulloch reportedly hadn't even heard the songs until the session.) One for UK psych completists.

Andy Morten

GLITTER WIZARD
Hunting Gatherers
★★★★

RIPPLE MUSIC LP

My introduction to Glitter Wizard came via last year's nifty *Kiss The Boot* EP and its brilliantly convincing Bowie-fronts-The-Glitter-Band reading of 'Suffragette City'. I expected more of the same from this reissue of their 2012 sophomore effort but got the same but different instead. The glam is gone and 'AOR' replaces the EP's 45s feel, but *Hunting Gatherers* still loves the sensational seventies.

'Worship The Devil' is as suitably Sabbath as one would expect from that title, 'Blood Of The Serpent' is Foghat living off the land Black Oak-style and being a fool for the city no more, and 'Motörider' totally earns that umlaut by sounding exactly like a lost *Agents Of Fortune* out-take. Meanwhile, 'Space' is appropriately Hawkwind-ish, complete with deadpan cosmic vocals and Dik Mikkery aplenty. The previous paragraph spells out why this writer is enjoying *Hunting Gatherers* so much; it's basically my pre-punk record collection, all on one album.

Peter Gallagher

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

prog nosis

MARCO ROSSI says yes, gets the hump, tastes the sugar and gets blown over by tides and tempests

The original plan was to invite the jury to suggest the first word that springs to mind upon hearing **The Yes Album** (RHINO 4-CD+BLURAY+LP, ★★★★). But presenting an open goal of that magnitude would be like inviting Thor to take "just one swing" at your chin with his hammer. The correct answer, however bewildered or apoplectic it might make you, is "excitement". Taking the listener as read, you can also clearly discern how excited YES made *themselves* feel in their honeymoon period with new boy Steve Howe. It's a riot of verticality; a giddily optimistic rocket ride into the exosphere of possibility.

You can even feel the beating of pop's hooky heart on 'I've Seen All Good People' and 'Yours Is No Disgrace' – admittedly before they start crowbarring musical sub-clauses into the fray, shedding 96% of this mag's readership at a stroke. But to remain determinedly unmoved by the sabre dance of Bill Bruford's clattering kit and Chris Squire's wiry bass, the scalding valves of Tony Kaye's growling, glowing Hammond, Steve Howe's maze-busting guitar and Jon Anderson's skylark vocals is surely a self-limiting stance. You'll ruin those lovely Cuban heels by digging them in so hard.

The Super Deluxe Edition boasts a new Dolby Atmos mix by Steven Wilson as well as his previous 5.1 mix, a hi-res stereo mix and the original mix – I think this qualifies as mixmatosis – plus two levitational '71 concerts. At this juncture, it's uncontainable, youthful enthusiasm more than onanistic indulgence, and that can't be a bad thing. Honestly.

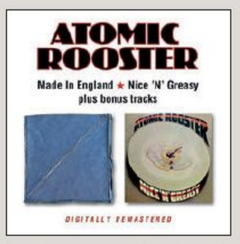
Long overdue a decent reappraisal are **CAMEL**, whose ship (of the desert) has finally come in, most extravagantly, in the giant shape of **Air Born: The MCA And Decca Years 1973-1984** (UMC 27-CD+5-BLURAY, ★★★★). That's remasters of *every* album and single released by the band in that time frame, plus new mixes of three London concerts from 1974, '76 and '77, a welter of previously unreleased outtakes, and 5.1 mixes of five albums. (Four remastered albums are also individually available as standalone LPs.) You could fit an actual camel into a box set of these dimensions – an opportunity squandered. Their signature melancholic softness, topped by Andy Latimer's keening, fat-toned guitar, is established early doors with 'Never Let Go', a gorgeous bedsit Lemsip of a song, and swiftly peaks with '75's *Music Inspired By The Snow Goose* (even if author Paul Gallico famously took the, ah, hump with Camel about it). This writer's favourite Camel era is the brief window when Richard Sinclair joined, bringing his acerbic whimsicality ('Down On The Farm'), his jazzy bass chops and, crucially, his supply-teacher-locked-in-the-cloisters vocals. Check out the politely plummy title track of '78's *Breathless* and ascend into decency heaven.

Speaking of boxes, **Remember The Future: 50th Anniversary Edition** (ESOTERIC 4-CD+BLURAY, ★★★★) by **NEKTAR** will at least fit on a shelf without your having to reinforce the joists or seek planning permission. It's still a generous undertaking, with a new remaster and remix, the *de rigueur* 5.1 mix, a 1973 *quad* mix – be still, my beating loon pants – two discs of '74 live material, and sundry audio-visual sundries. I used to think that Nektar were a better idea on paper – or blotter – than in actuality, largely because I was jealous of them for being pallid Brits residing in Germany, but also because I was mentally punishing them for not being as daring as, say, Can, Neu!, Faust or Kraftwerk. I enjoy them now, though, with the caveat that they still sound like a safe pair of hands as opposed to a pair of tattooed hands juggling flamethrowers and live crocodiles, which will always be my preference. *Remember The Future* is a fine piece of work, closer in melodious spirit to the Moodies or BJH than acid evangelism.

Prog Nosis déjà vu: here come **FAMILY** and **HIGH TIDE** again, but who's complaining? The former's 1973 swansong, **It's Only A Movie** (ESOTERIC 2-CD, ★★★★), appears here with a disc of BBC session and concert extras, and swaggers into the sunset with the band's paradigmatic art-rock weirdness largely intact. Even at their lairiest and most barrelhouse ('Sweet Desire', 'Banger'), they simply couldn't walk a straight line, and some of us love them for it. Meanwhile, High Tide's towering, terrifying '69 debut **Sea Shanties** (ESOTERIC LP, ★★★★★) reappears, remastered, on vinyl with its original gatefold artwork fully restored. Tony Hill's guitar and Simon House's violin still awaken the furies in an indefinable way that no-one else ever quite managed: their heaviness was as psychosomatic as it was sonic.

"It's uncontainable, youthful enthusiasm more than onanistic indulgence, and that can't be a bad thing. Honestly"

Now, if asked which band contained two of the all-time greatest UK guitarists, you'd probably say The Yardbirds: but it was actually **TEMPEST**, who numbered Allan Holdsworth and Ollie Halsall among their ranks. (Both at once, briefly. Help ma boab.) **Tempest / Living In Fear** (BGO 2-CD, ★★★) is what happens when jazzers like drummer/founder Jon Hiseman crave a piece of rock action: they slum it in riff-town until those inconceivably accomplished solos give the game away. Holdsworth is typically flawless on the 1972 debut album, but I still prefer Halsall on '74's *Living In Fear*: the euphoric wildness of his playing feared nothing. Tempest's albums are, however, impressive rather than indispensable: both guitarists did their best work miles from here.



A direct link between Tempest and **ATOMIC ROOSTER** is storied, 10-storey vocalist Chris Farlowe, who put in memorably hollering stints with Jon Hiseman's Colosseum as well as the latter bods. **Made In England / Nice 'n' Greasy** (BGO 2-CD, ★★★★), from 1972 and '73 respectively, trade in a kind of sodden-flared Brit soul/funk which sounds terrific from this remove. Farlowe theatrically throws his head back like a bull moose, Vincent Crane pulls out all the literal stops on his Hammond, and every now and again something like the orchestrated 'Time Take My Life' comes along and swats you off your feet.

Rooster contemporaries **PALADIN** come across like early Santana with the kind of flu that soaks your bedding through to the floorboards. **Paladin / Charge** (BGO 2-CD, ★★★★) unites the band's two hyper-intense albums in a percussive, pulse-quickening ecstasy of enticingly godless rhythms. Be in no doubt, they were righteous fuckers, and they're waiting impatiently for you to sample them.

And finally, 1970's **First Battle** (GUERSSEN LP, ★★★★) by flute-toting Belgian light-heavies **WATERLOO** reappears on ultra-limited vinyl and churns away deliciously in the manner of *This Was*-era Tull if David Byron had gate-crashed the sessions with a choir of himself. A Hammond boils itself dry in here also: *deep* joy.

Breezy and eclectic. Sanullim

Special K

SANULLIM
Vol 1: Already Now
Vol 2: Spread Silk On My Heart
Vol 3: My Heart (My Soul Is A Wasteland)
Evening Breeze

ALL ★★★

ALL GUERSSEN LP/2-LPS

Made decades before the emergence of K-pop, South Korean trio Sanullim's recorded legacy remains conclusive proof that the phenomenon of K-rock was very much alive despite a prevailing culture of widespread censorship during the late '70s. Formed by the Kim brothers Chang-wan, Chang-won and Chang-ik while they were students, the trio released 13 albums between 1977 and '97, each of them distinctively prefixed as Vols 1-13.

The familiar yet "strange to Western ears" combination of conventional rock instrumentation (guitar, organ, drums), Korean language lyrics and puzzlingly eclectic juxtapositions of fragments of pop, underground garage, psych, new-wave, no-wave and even occasional hints of krautrock and prog ensures that Sanullim have more than their fair share of appeal to all seekers after the definition of the truly exotic. With the first three albums all released within the space of one year, several features are common to *Vol 1* ('77), *Vol 2* and *Vol 3* (both '78) – defining stylistic traits such as overpowering bursts of fuzz guitar, a liking for Farfisa-esque organ and tight metronomic beats.

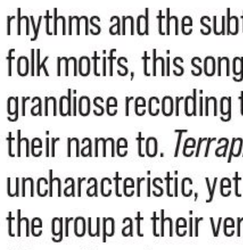
As has been said, the story by no means ended there. Ever prolific, between '79 and '83 Sanullim would go on to release a further six albums, and the double collection *Evening Breeze* shines a revealing light on a diverse selection of 23 tracks from those comparatively lesser-known titles. All the stylistic particularities and eccentricities familiar from the first three albums – the fuzz guitar *tsunamis*, the abrupt changes in mood and direction – are there for all to decode, decipher and savour. Whatever borrowings and influences can be glimpsed through the at times baffling re-shuffling of ingredients ultimately Sanullim's sound, in all its remarkable eccentric glory, is entirely their own. Taken together, this handsome stash of vinyl adds up to a journey of discovery and catching up for the uninitiated.

Grahame Bent

GRATEFUL DEAD
Terrapin Station

★★★

RHINO LP



An archetypal record of two halves, 1977's *Terrapin Station* marks the beginning of a downturn in the quality of the Dead's studio output. A deal with Clive Davis's Arista label saw *Rumours* producer Keith Olsen drafted in to provide a hit record, and promising opener 'Estimated Prophet' seems to fit the bill well enough. Sadly, the rest of the album's first side falls flat, the group losing interest amongst slick production and uninspired material.

Flip the record over however, and the 17-minute title-track, led by Jerry Garcia, saves its reputation. Loaded with orchestrations and choir, among intricate rhythms and the subtlest hints of traditional folk motifs, this song-suite is the most grandiose recording the Dead ever put their name to. *Terrapin Station* may be uncharacteristic, yet it's a great example of the group at their very best, in turn justifying this rather nice new vinyl pressing.

Ben Phillipson

JIMI HENDRIX & TRAFFIC
The Legendary Sessions: New York & Hollywood 1968-1970

★★★

SUTRA CD

Aside from solo studio jams and those with the Experience, a number of high-profile jam sessions featuring Jimi in the company of Johnny Winter, Stephen Stills and John McLaughlin have survived, as have these recordings with members of Traffic. Taped by Chris Wood at various locations including Electric Lady in New York between 1968 and '70 these weren't chance meetings but part of an ongoing connection of fellow spirits that dated back to when Hendrix and Traffic first crossed paths on the London club circuit in '67.

Comprising three tracks – the lengthy 'Jam Thing', the considerably briefer 'Guitar Thing' and the mammoth 35-minute 'Session Thing' – the recordings are remarkable for their clarity and the free-flowing interplay between Jimi's fluid guitar and Chris Wood's sax and flute. Listening to these jams gradually unravel, you're left to reflect that an official recording project featuring Jimi and Traffic would almost certainly have produced worthwhile results.

Grahame Bent

MARC JONSON
Groova Tizmo!

★★★

MUNSTER LP

This collection of unreleased recordings is taken from a body of work laid down between 1979 and 2012 in Jonson's flat in New York's Greenwich Village. Yet despite the long gestation period, the compositions still form a coherent whole. There are playful lyrics amongst tracks that set out with minimal guitar and keyboard backing, then begin to be satisfyingly overlaid with instrumentation and multi-tracked backing vocals.

The jagged vocals and chimes of 'Turn In On' could almost belong to a lost They Might Be Giants recording but there's a dash of country-rock on 'I Don't Have You' and even a soupçon of Merseybeat on 'I'd Cry'. Jonson uses his influences wisely taking basic doo-wop chord progressions, blending them with his emotions and then aiming them in a brand-new direction as on 'The Man Who Walks On Air', which conspires to conjure up a modern take on the strolling New Orleans sound of Huey Smith.

Henry Hutton

LA FANTASTICA
From Ear To Ear

★★★★

NOW-AGAIN/GHETTO LP

Now-Again is embarking on a reissue programme of the catalogue of Latin soul kingpin Joe Bataan's short-lived Ghetto Records operation from the early '70s.

From Ear To Ear the 1971 debut album from La Fantastica a finely-tuned 11-piece *salsa orquesta* from Brooklyn is the first title from the long-deleted Ghetto catalogue to finally make it back into circulation. Led by tenor saxophonist, vocalist and composer Samuel 'Sammy' Leon, Orquesta La Fantastica began life as a purely

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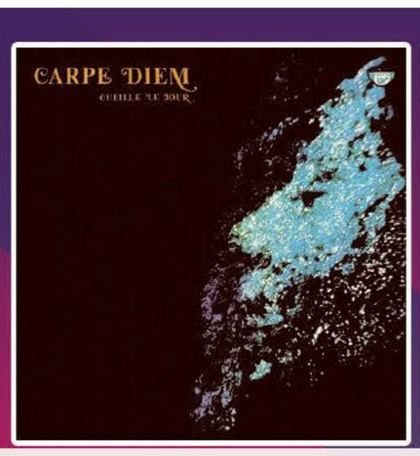

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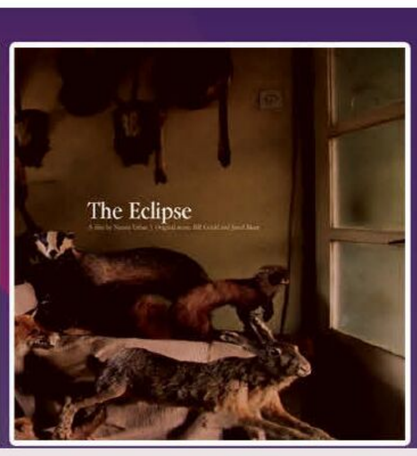

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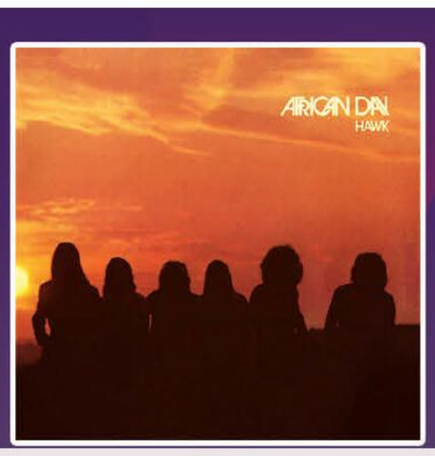

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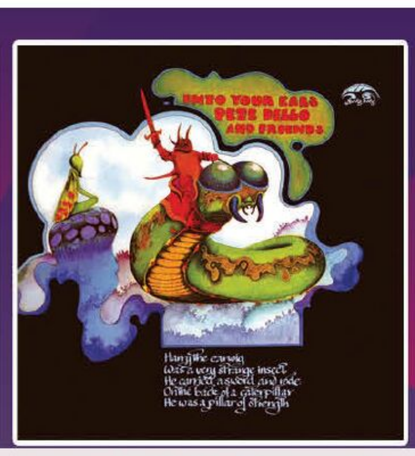

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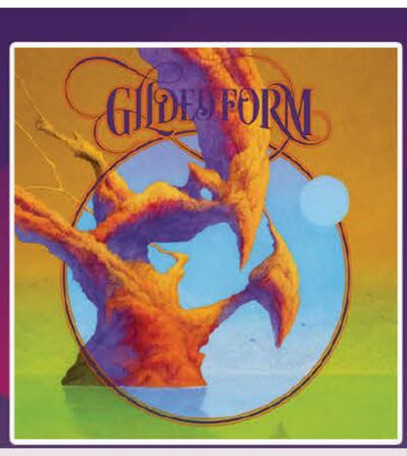

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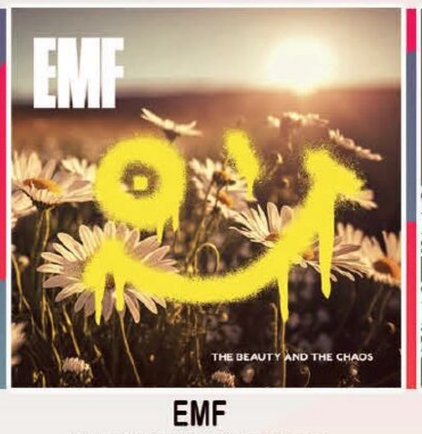

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VARIOUS ARTISTS
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WEST COAST CONSORTIUM
All The Love In The World: Complete Recordings 1964-1972
★★★★

GRAPEFRUIT 3-CD

The task of curating songwriter/guitarist Geoff Simpson's late '60s demos started with Castle's 2003 Pye anthology *Looking Back and continued in earnest with Wooden Hill's 2008 compilation Mr Umbrella Man*, but this set comprising a solid four albums' worth of tracks – 20 of them previously unreleased – is an exhaustive must-have for completists.

More commonly known by their abridged moniker, Consortium's lowly dalliance with the charts came in this collection's title, a dreamy, orchestrated power ballad that epitomised the class of 1969, yet despite having a minor hit under their belts and a flood of live engagements, Consortium's story of "disenchanted songwriter cum guitarist cum family man leaves pop group with potential, to pursue a career in hit-writing" is one sadly mirrored by umpteen hopefuls of yore.

The band's entire Pye and Trend singles, plus a cache of adjacent curios make up Disc One and features their most "psych" outing, the lauded 'Colour Sergeant Lilywhite', a tale of post-service disillusionment set against swathes of gut-pounding phasing, and Simpson's 'The House Upon The Hill', its common theme of "work, work and work 'til you die" a nod to The Kinks' 'Shangri-la'. Disc Two houses Simpson's '68 demos, an introduction to work that would later form the cream of the band's Pye releases recorded in two makeshift East London studios – one in a room above an undertaker's shop owned by bassist John Barker's father, the other further East (Stratford) in a room above a paper factory.

But Disc Three, where do we start? Both 'The Fire Fighter' and 'Madeline' equal The Easybeats or Grapefruit for blue-eyed pop-soul perfection and showcase Simpson's guitar playing, a brilliant amalgam of melody and imagination. Elsewhere an oft-wooed New Orleans chambermaid pines after the boy she let behind in 'Aimee (Sing Your Song For Me)' evoking The Beach Boys and Harry Nilsson. Anyone with their ear to the ground will already be in awe of Simpson's early '70s works under the Airbus banner. Dig deeper into this final disc – it's a treasure trove that parallels things to come.

Louis Wiggett

instrumental ensemble and this is reflected in the richness of the arrangements on the album's instrumental-heavy passages. Arguably best showcased by the slow-burning elegiac stroll of 'Latin Blues' on which the combination of vibes and horns creates a hazy dreamlike ambience, and the fiery closing mini-suite 'Sassie', with its numerous changes in tempo and dynamics, *From Ear To Ear* is crying out to be rediscovered.

Grahame Bent

THE LOVES
The Most Of The Loves
★★★★

DAY TRIP 2-LP

Twenty years on from their Track & Field label debut, Cardiff's pop purveyors The Loves mark the anniversary with a double LP set of greatest hits and misses.

Continual bubblegum fun, The Loves' line-up shifted from year-to-year, but a clear aesthetic remained unchanged. With obvious allegiance to the archetypes of 1965 (Shangri-La's, Subterranean Dylan, Andrew Oldham), chief songwriter Simon Love carved out a string of songs that remain playful and irreverent enough to revoke accusations of revivalism. 'Xs And Os' owns its goodtime glam swagger, while 'Chelsea Girl (2007)' and 'Love Song No 7' are folk-pop gems of a high order, all via a lens set on the right side of "twee".

A new song 'True Love' feels like a lovely summation of the group's *raison d'être* and nicely ties together this comprehensive retrospective.

Ben Phillipson

MAJOR ARCANA
Major Arcana
★★★★

GUERSSEN LP

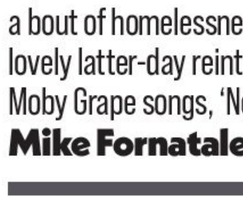
The first official vinyl releases of this oft-booted 1976 private pressing. This writer loves it, although the much-missed Patrick The Lama was less-giving in his review in *The Acid Archives*. But then perhaps things have somewhat changed in the minds of collectors since he wrote that.

Jim Spencer's project is a solid example of what was happening in small towns across the States in the mid-70s – Mequon, Wisconsin in this case. 'Papa Doc' is swamp-rock in the Tony Joe White mould, Dylan and coffee-house folk arises, and on gems like 'Western Wind', 'Dark Trip To Edge City', 'Steal Your Love Back Home' and a blissed-out take on 'Greensleeves', the acid guitars, synths and flute are glorious, full of the sounds heard on the *Folk Funk & Trippy Troubadours* compilations. It's a broad church, but even when not too freaky, the bluesy, folky songs and Spencer's sweet voice are utterly charming.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

BOB MOSLEY
True Blue
★★★★

STEADY BOY CD



Well, there's never been a post-Moby Grape solo album that wasn't great, and this is certainly no exception. And a welcome reissue, too, as it's not been available for many a year. Originally released in 2006, *True Blue* has a pronounced homespun, homemade ethic, even if not the "homemade-but-on-SATURN" feel of bandmate Skip Spence's *Oar.*

Mosley plays acoustic guitars, electric guitars and bass, and is joined by Dale Ockerman on keyboards and The Sons Of Champlin's late James Preston on drums. This is all tried-and-true, familiar territory – barroom blues, country, R&B – but you've never been in a barroom in which the singer had a voice like this one. (I have, but it was Bob himself.) And yes, the years have left that crystal-clear howl virtually intact, even after a bout of homelessness in the '90s. Includes lovely latter-day reinterpretations of two Moby Grape songs, 'Never' and 'Lazy Me'.

Mike Fornatale

NIKKI AND THE CORVETTES
Nikki And The Corvettes
★★★★★

MUNSTER LP

Long championed as an early cornerstone of the nascent powerpop scene Nikki (Dominique Lorenz) And The Corvettes' sole release (Bomp!, 1980) merged giggly schoolgirl lyrics (mostly written by Nikki's boyfriend, producer Peter James) about 'Backseat Love', 'Summertime Fun' and, predominantly, 'Boys, Boys, Boys' with a Ramones-y punk/bubblegum beat that was incredibly catchy and incessantly danceable. Unfortunately, gender-bias and lack of all-important radio airplay consigned the release to cutout bins and cult status among collectors.

This reissue resurrects the giddy fun and perky pop sweetness of teenage angst inherent in diary-styled lyrics that proclaim Nikki's love for that unobtainable boy: 'You're The One', 'C'mon', 'Let's Go', 'Just What I Need' and the ultimate relationship-killer, 'I Wanna Be Your Girlfriend', perhaps an answer song to the previous year's 'I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend' by The Rubinoos? Two equally enjoyable singles are appended as bonus tracks.

Jeff Penczak

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THE ORIENT EXPRESS
The Orient Express
★★★★

SUNDAZED LP

Far from being one of the countless sitar/ethno-exploitation albums pumped out by every two-bit record label in the US in 1969, The Orient Express's sole offering, recorded for Bob Shad's Mainstream – which seemed to specialise in above-average one-shots (see also Bohemian Vendetta, Lincoln St Exit, Ellie Pop, Tangerine Zoo) – not only holds up to scrutiny but is a thoroughly enjoyable listen.

The product of a Frenchman, a Belgian and an Iranian transplanted to California via New York with a box of electric ouds, minitars and dumbeks, what sets this album apart is the quality of the playing, singing and production, as well as its occasional forays out of semi-improvised exotica into commercial pop song territory. That said, 'Train To Bombay' sounds like The Purple Gang's 'Granny Takes A Trip', while 'For A Moment' could be Lothar & The Hand People. Full of Eastern promise.

Andy Morten

PAUL MCCARTNEY & WINGS
Band On The Run: 50th Anniversary Edition
★★★

MPL 2-CD/LP/2-LP

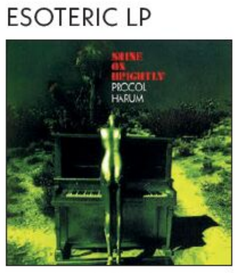
Alongside *Ram*, 1973's *Band On The Run* represents post-Beatles McCartney's creative peak, with even relatively slight material like 'Mamunia' and 'Picasso's Last Words' helping to bolster the album's quasi-conceptual feel. When it hits big ('Jet', 'Let Me Roll It', 'Bluebird', '1985'), it's evidence that few artists hit the middle ground between rock and pop with as much style and panache as McCartney.

Yet, as a third, multi-format expanded edition appears, one wonders if energy wouldn't be better spent clearing up the dustier corners of a solo catalogue that still leaves gems like 'Waterspout' and 'Cage' languishing on lo-res bootlegs. The new additional material here is an "underdubbed" early mix, which is interesting to hear, but the real gold remains on an album which is in no real danger of being forgotten.

Ben Phillipson

PROCOL HARUM
Shine On Brightly
★★★★

ESOTERIC LP



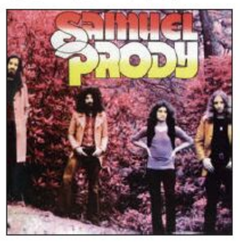
Overshadowed as it may be by "that song", Procol's output rewards re-listening at several points beyond their 1967 heyday, with much of their subsequent work often poised thrillingly on the wobbly point between exploration and pretension.

Their second album, here freshly remastered for vinyl, shares much in common with The Moody Blues' albums from the same era, not least in the slightly hammy spoken word sections that help stitch together the side-long 'In Held 'Twas I'. The suite's highlight offers a vocal showcase for keyboardist Matthew Fisher on 'In The Autumn Of My Madness' with strong hints of early Genesis. Likewise, their partly recognised influence on both John Cale and The Band is audible on the brilliant opening volley of 'Quite Rightly So' and the title track. As a whole it may be patchy, but *Shine On...* is an entertaining, listenable record boasting a clutch of fantastic moments.

Ben Phillipson

SAMUEL PRODY
Samuel Prody
★★★

GUERSSEN CD/LP



Guerssen continues its self-proclaimed mission of reissuing early '70s albums by just about every heavy/psychedelic/progressive band fame forgot, and next up is the self-titled sole outing by Samuel Prody, a four-piece despite the name.

'Who Will Buy' has a dreamy laidback groove with some hymnal backing vocals and a brief detour into metal territory, 'Time Is All Mine" is bluesy prog with a catchy chorus, and 'Mr Make Believe' displays some fancy fretwork from guitarist Derek Smallcombe. The stand-out track is epic closer 'Hallucination', a glorious mishmash that combines a Zeppelin-esque opening act, an overegged hippie gospel mid-section, more pseudo-sacred vocals, and what sounds like Pete Townshend windmilling happily away towards the end. This will be right up your proverbial street if you have enjoyed recent Guerssen reissues by Bullet, Orang-Utan and Patto, and it comes with a detailed interview with Prody main man Tony Savva.

Peter Gallagher

THE SPIDERS
Don't Blow Your Mind: The Mascot Sessions
★★★★★

MASCOT/OKTAY LP

These 1965-66 recordings taped at Audio Recorders in Pheonix, Arizona for Jack Curtis's Mascot label offer a fascinating snapshot of how the future Alice Cooper Group sounded.

Beatles and Stones-influenced R&B is key throughout tracking sessions for 'Why Don't You Love Me?', cool under-the-radar Merseybeat originally done by The Blackwells and cameoed on the film *Ferry Cross The Mersey*. 'Hitch Hike' is Marvin Gaye via the Stones, and 'Don't Blow Your Mind' – the earliest take of this Spiders original penned by Furnier/Dunaway – is one of the great '60s punk creations. Here, they're in transition, obviously attracted to the wild, happening sounds of The Who. This version, though not as deadly as the fully-formed, fuzz-blown Santa Cruz 45, but is fascinating to witness. Dwayne Witten from original Pheonix act P-Nutt Butter, and friend of the late Jack Curtis supplies a great, insightful sleeve note. Magnificent stuff.

Lenny Helsing

CAT STEVENS
Matthew & Son
New Masters
BOTH ★★★★

BOTH DERAM/UMC LPS

If you're looking for an example of the lightning-fast faddishness of 1967, look no further. *Matthew & Son*, Stevens' debut, was released in March and hit #7, its supremely assured blend of tuneful, almost anthemic songs and crunchy orch-pop arrangements ensure it's both accessible and artistic. The Tremeloes took 'Here Comes My Baby' to #4. 'I've Found A Love' and 'Baby Get Your Head Screwed On' are mini-epics that would've made worthy singles, yet 'I Love My Dog' and the title track were quickly followed into the Top 10 by the non-album 'I'm Gonna Get Me A Gun' the same month that *Matthew & Son* appeared.

December's follow-up *New Masters*, however, failed to chart completely, its lead single 'Kitty' struggling to #47. It's a less celebratory, more ruminative collection than the debut, but none the worse for it. Cat's reading of 'The First Cut Is The Deepest' may lack the soulful punch of PP Arnold's hit version, but 'The Laughing Apple' presages the flamenco-rock moves of *Forever Changes* and 'Moonstone' sounds like a dry run for the '70s Island years.

Andy Morten

THE THINGS
Coloured Heaven
★★★

TEEN SOUND LP

Originally released on Greg Shaw's Voxx imprint in 1984, the debut by LA flower-punks The Things has stood the test of time better than much of the retro-obsessed school of the era.

The original sleeve art (a hand-drawn sun/rainbow/flowers combo tastefully overhauled for this 40th anniversary remix/reissue) hints at the gently lysergic folk-rock and psychedelic powerpop that characterise the album – it's more *Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn, Jones Ltd* than *The Electric Prunes* for sure. Actually, for all its '60s allusions, much of *Coloured Heaven* occupies a space closer to contemporary work by The Rain Parade and the first wave of Creation Records acts than that of label-mates like garage sticklers The Tell-Tale Hearts or the naff pastiches of The Eyes Of Mind. Check out the opening 1-2 punch of 'Eyes Of A Child' and 'I Won't Be There'. Three previously unreleased bonus tracks and fresh interview-packed liner notes seal the deal.

Andy Morten

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Joe Meek's Tea Chest Tapes: Do The Strum! Girl Groups And Pop Chanteuses (1960-1966)
★★★

CHERRY RED 3-CD BOX SET

Here's another dip into Joe Meek's idiosyncratic brand of rations coupon and National Service pop, courtesy of his seemingly bottomless tea chest and those folks at Cherry Red.

Girls are the focus, with Joe's best gal pal Glenda Collins getting the lion's share of cuts, and why not, as she seemed most likely to succeed. 'I Lost My Heart At The Fairground', over which Meek emptied his entire box of sonic tricks, sounds like a sure-fire hit, but alas no. Other contenders are Valerie Masters' 'Christmas Calling' and the forgotten Lea & Chess's 'Little Star (Shine On Us Tonight)', both of which deserved a spot on future festive compilations rather than oblivion. However, there's no escaping there are more should notta beens than shoulda beens here, and at 88 tracks over three CDs, it's too crammed for the curious and is for dedicated Meekons only.

Peter Gallagher

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND
Live At Max's Kansas City
★★★★

RHINO 2-LP

Nothing new here. This is a straight reissue on fuchsia-coloured double vinyl of the 2015 15-track version of one of the all-time great live albums.

Few records can have planted the listener so intimately into the room more than this one does; harken foot taps, the tinkle of glasses, chairs and tables being scraped across floors and the chatter of customers. The recording captures the band – Reed, Morrison, brothers Doug and Billy Yule – four misfits, slightly under-rehearsed and about to implode. Chalk to Mo Tucker's cheese, Uncle Billy's drums, however, sound so *alive,* one of the greatest snare sounds ever put to disc, and drive the band on the up-tempo numbers, which rock out in such damn exhilaratingly electric fashion – 'Waiting', 'White Light', 'Lonesome Cowboy Bill' and 'Beginning To See The Light'. Perfection is often overrated. This album is imperfect in so many ways; it's what makes it such an exciting record.

Vic Templar

waxin' celluloid

THOMAS PATTERSON travels far and wide in search of the latest soundtrack delights

It's an international jamberoo this month, and we visit Japan first with **Gincho Wataridori** (★★★★, WEWANTSOUNDS CD/LP) from cult singer and Japanese B-movie queen **MEIKO KAJI**, a mix of soundtrack cues from eponymous 1972 gangster flick *Wandering Ginza Butterfly* (to give it its Anglo title), the *Nobori Ryu* film series and some seriously groovy non-movie related pop. This is twangy, cinematic stuff – it's an obvious point but this is clearly an inspiration for Tarantino and *Kill Bill*. It's another fab entry in the Wataridori reissue series by WeWantSounds and an education in Japanese music for those of us whose knowledge is mostly gleamed from the *Nippon Girls* collection of comps.

Just yesterday I was blissfully unaware that Nick Ross-hosted catch-a-criminal TV show *Crimewatch* was based on a series out of Germany but here we are: not only am I hip to the existence of **Aktenzeichen XY... Ungelöst** (★★★★, TRAMP LP), but I know now that it's been running since the '60s and has a soundtrack with a totally different vibe to the British version. No stabbing '80s synths and pounding drums for these civic-minded Germans. Oh no, for them it's all brassy crime themes by a variety of composers that could've come out of some shadowy film noir in the '50s. With track titles like 'Colluding Crooks' and 'Daylight Robbery', this is more golden age Hollywood crime flick than Teutonic telly, and is therefore rather fun.

It's a short hop, skip und jump from Germany to Austria, and our next offering from Viennese prog-rockers **PATERNOSTER** and their soundtrack to **Die Ersten Tage (The First Days)** (★★★★, NOW AGAIN/GHETTO LP), a hippie sci-fi film from 1971. *Shindig!* hasn't seen the movie but according to the website *The Vienna Review* it's "a cinematogram with music and sounds as well as 67 inter-titles in which a group of rangers is able to ward off an approaching threat through solidarity", which sounds suitably crazed. Paternoster's soundtrack, comprising 37 untitled cues, is a sprawling instrumental rock opus, heavy on the organ, which intersects at that junction where heavy-psych first mutated into wigged-out prog. Wunderbar.

To Belgium and **A Special Radio-TV Record Selection 23** (★★★★, SDBAN LP) the latest in Sdban's reissue of library tracks originally released between 1976 and '81 on Belgian imprint Selection. Within a slew of groovy library bods like René Costy and Jacques Siroul do their cinematic soundscape thing. Within are spacey synth work-outs (Stern Selection's 'Imagination'), soaring strings and wah-wah guitar (Leonard D Messina's 'Osmoses') and some frantic sax-heavy jazz-funk (Bob Porter's 'Chief Of Freen Bean'). If library-music is your bag, then this excellent comp needs to be in your (record) bag.

Born in 1931 in the former Yugoslavia, composer **TOMISLAV SIMOVIĆ** was a composer and electronic music pioneer with a list of credits as long as the Danube (which is very long indeed). Yet despite his impressive CV, he's little known in the West, a situation label Fox & His Friends are aiming to change with a reissue series that now lands on **Professor Balthazar** (★★★★, FOX & HIS FRIENDS LP) and **The Zagreb School Of Animated Film (Original Soundtracks 1961-1982)** (★★★★, FOX & HIS FRIENDS LP). *Professor Balthazar* was a Yugoslavian/German cartoon that ran from 1967 to '78 and was apparently hugely popular outside the Angolophone world. The music is delightful, lush and heavily orchestrated, with trilling woodwind and a central theme so catchy it had me walking round town singing "Ba-Ba-Balthazar" to myself like some kind of earworm-riddled lunatic. *The Zagreb School Of Animated Film* disc meanwhile gathers together tracks recorded for animated films made for adults, with music spanning from free-jazz to moody electronic. It's a terrific compilation – the kind of thing Finders Keepers or Trunk would've loved to get their hands on.

Another entry in the "soundtrack to an imaginary movie" genre that occasionally pop up here, with **LARRY MANTECA**'s **Zombie Mandingo** (★★★★, FOUR FLIES LP). From Italy, this is the imaginary score to a '70s Italian B-movie – a bit of Fulci/Lenzi-style horror gussied up with sounds that ape Umiliani, Les Baxter's exotica and the KPM library, run through with exploitation-heavy Afrobeat in service of tracks with titles like 'Voodoo Hunter' and 'Love And Bones'. Press notes compare it to a mash-up of Jacopetti's *Mondo Cane* and Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust*, a description we'll go along with because why not?

Our final four are American, starting with two "soundtracks", **They Move In The Night** (★★★, NUMERO GROUP LP) and **You're Not From Around Here** (★★★, NUMERO GROUP LP).

According to Numero Group, these previously unissued soundtracks were discovered on the dusty shelves of the Louis Wayne Moody Pictures vault, a claim we find a bit fishy considering no movies with such titles exist in reference books, and the Louis Wayne Moody Picture Group appears solely on the Numero website. Instead, we'll bet top dollar that these are compilations of dusty old 45s from Numero's voluminous vaults – surf twang, weirdo country and strange, fuzzed-out covers of 'Rumble' beamed in from distant galaxies, here packaged in an intriguing fashion. These may not be real movies, but David Lynch should use one of these for his next masterwork.

Hollywood heavyweight Dave Grusin's score to Neil Simon's all-star 1976 murder mystery parody **Murder By Death** (★★★★, VARESE SARABANDE/CRAFT LP) gets its first ever vinyl release with cover art by Charles Addams of *Addams Family* fame. Grusin plays it relatively straight here, developing that jaunty semi-classical sound you find on old Agatha Christie movies and which would be aped on TV series like *Murder She Wrote*. Utterly charming.

Two years later, writer Simon and director Robert Moore would try the same trick again with *The Cheap Detective*, a rum parody of *The Maltese Falcon*. We only mention it because long-time *Shindig!* fave Paul Williams appears in a supporting role and we needed a segue into our final soundtrack, Williams' soundtrack to Brian De Palma's cult 1974 musical horror **Phantom Of The Paradise** (★★★★, MUSIC ON VINYL LP). It's been reissued umpteen times, but who's counting when the results are so great, freakish doo-wop and rock opera scuzz nestling alongside some of those patented Paul Williams old-school singer/songwriter charms. It's baffling to reconcile the De Palma who directed this with the Hitchcock aficionado who would go on to make *Blow Out* and *Dressed To Kill*, but the soundtrack remains a glam rockin' good time.

reviews now

A multitude of new music

All Kinds Of Wow

DANIEL ROMANO'S OUTFIT

Too Hot To Sleep

★★★★★

YOU'VE CHANGED CD/LP

The Outfit's last recorded offering La Luna dates back 18 months, which, in Daniel Romano years, feels like a lifetime. Since then, the Canadian rockers have kept busy with live shows that lucky attendees are still raving about, various side projects and, of course, the gestation of more music. *Too Hot To Sleep* couldn't be more different to its predecessor: whereas *La Luna* possessed a progressive spirit that embraced grandeur, *Too Hot To Sleep* delivers a forceful blend of powerpop and punk that simply refuses to let listeners catch a breath. Half an hour later, it's hard not to hit play again and feel thankful that, despite the most sophisticated prophecies, the strange beast known as rock is still alive and, in the hands of the finest practitioners, remains vital.

If any comparisons among Romano's impressive catalogue are to be drawn, then the record *Too Hot To Sleep* most resembles is 2020's live album *Okay Wow* (not that anybody asked, but so far that is this writer's favourite Outfit release). Exhilarating and chock full of moments that are perfectly tailored to fire up stages across the world ('That's Too Rich'), *Too Hot to Sleep* starts out on a high point (the Television-esque shimmer of 'You Can Steal My Kiss') and just gets better. There are moments of lyricism ('Field Of Ruins') and others of absolute clarity ('Generation End').

Yet, what keeps the Outfit firmly above many bands who wish they rocked as hard as them – and eventually fall for tired nostalgia – is not only a great sense of urgency and spontaneity (the album was cut with minimal fuss or preparation), but a willingness to remain tuned into the world in 2024. These songs can seamlessly pair the directness their genre calls for with thoughts on some of today's bigger issues (fascist tendencies, environmental catastrophe). Any notion that classic-sounding guitar music is inherently dumb and that politically conscious songs are preachy and boring is perfectly stifled by *Too Hot To Sleep*. After all, it never was *only* rock 'n 'roll.

Camilla Aisa

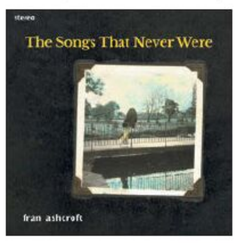
Staying up til all hours. The Outfit

FRAN ASHCROFT

The Songs That Never Were

★★★★

THINK LIKE A KEY CD



Fran Ashcroft has been around longer than he'd probably care to admit. Having fronted '70s powerpop band The Monos, he then went on to form the criminally-ignored Faraway Stars before settling into a dual career as producer and songwriter. Last year's solo album, the wonderfully parochial *A Tour Of British Duck Ponds*, won praise in many quarters and is now being followed-up with this: not exactly a new album as such, but a reworking of recently rediscovered songs found on old reel-to-reel tapes and cassettes, now given a fab Beatles-style AI makeover.

Most of these songs date back to the early '70s and have a soft, rolling melodic vibe – a couple, strangely enough, sounding like lost Lennon ballads. But if you really want to know how effective AI can be at bringing the dead back to life, check out the title track. The muddy intro is Fran's original demo, the rest – well – something else.

Chris Twomey

ASTRAL GRAY

The Past Is In The Way

★★★★

STUDIO NUNN LP

Astral Gray aka multi-instrumentalist Graham Nunn has been a feature of the Brighton music scene since the start of the decade – supporting and starring in equal measure. And now he's putting all this practice to good use with the release of his first long-player *The Past Is In The Way.*

Technically it's his second album, but the first to be recorded in the studio – 2022's *Lah Dee Dah* was a bedroom production. Either way it's a thing of psychedelic beauty. Opening with the Animal Collective-inspired 'Year Of The Clown', *The Past* is sludgy, drone-laden, melodious, part shoegaze-part Paisley that owes a considerable debt to late '80s indie and dare I say it, The Velvet Underground. Featuring singles 'We Can't Lose What We Never Had' and 'Mirror On The Wall', Gray's psych credentials are in full flow. Whether it's his debut or his sophomore album – it's a winner.

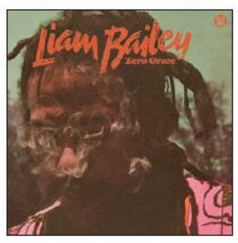
Sarah Gregory

LIAM BAILEY

Zero Grace

★★★★★

BIG CROWN CD/LP



Nottingham-born Bailey has hit a rich seam with the songs on his second album for Brooklyn's Big Crown label. Digging deep into the '70s reggae heard during his formative years, he articulately explores childhood trauma, racism, identity and more.

Alongside the stand-out rebel reggae ('Mercy Tree', 'Sour Wine') are lighter moments – soulful two-stepper 'Dance With Me', and the lovers rock of 'Sekkle Down'. There's room too for folksy ruminations ('Winter Is Within Thee', 'Light Up the Darkness'). With prime choice producer Leon Michels (El Michels Affair), Bailey has achieved a variety of sounds, some knowingly grainy at times – sibilance, distortion, natural room reverb and woofer-straining bass are all welcome guests. It works – The album sounds warm, vintage, and refreshingly human. *Zero Grace* is full of hope, honesty, and positivity – one that will move heads, hearts and feet. You sense an artist at the height of his powers.

Duncan Fletcher

ANTON BARBEAU

Morgenmusik / Nachtschlager

★★★★

GARE DU NORD 2-CD

Written and recorded in California and Berlin and taking inspiration from the poetry of Frank O'Hara and Iggy Pop's *The Idiot,* Barbeau's umpteenth LP in 30-odd years is a sprawling double set that gleefully embraces the production-line principles of German *schlager* pop, if not necessarily the sound.

On the Cali side of the scoresheet, 'Waiting On The Radio' is classic jangly AM pop, nostalgic yet timeless, while dark forces surface on 'Mothership Projection' and 'Gambit'. Barbeau goes moody Bowie on 'What Did The Operator Say' and 'Ding Dong (Wake-Up)', before the pure Buddy Holly bop of 'Come Back', apparently the first song a young Anton ever wrote. Linked together by surreal pseudo-adverts and featuring a host of heavy friends, the album is complemented by a separate CD of remixes by other Gare Du Nord acts (Papernut Cambridge's "goth club remix" of kraut-disco banger 'Circustime Train' is our favourite). Go buy!

Ben Graham

Elephant Stone. Still raining, still dreaming

DIANE BIRCH
Flying On Abraham
★★★

LÉGÈRE RECORDINGS CD/LP

The name, Diane Birch, may have a ring of the older lady from the Human Resources department, but there is nothing prosaic about the enchanting vocal that instantly demands your attention here. Birch is already a decade into her career (that's music, not HR) and has built an impressive roster of celebrity admirers along the way. Soul legend Betty Wright produced her 2009 debut which also featured a certain Lenny Kaye.

The youthful looking American singer songwriter recorded her fourth album in England, but the songs here imitate the cool, breezy sounds of '70s AOR AM radio, channelling soft-rock and blue-eyed soul. Her vocal range and piano-led grooves recall the refined grace of Carole King, packing a suitcase of relationship experiences into classic songs with familiar sounding tunes. Check out the gorgeous flowing melodies on 'Moto Moon' and the understated funky ode to an old flame 'Jukebox Johnny'.

Paul Ritchie

BLACK CROWES
Happiness Bastards
★★★★★

SILVER ARROW CD/LP

What, *these* guys again? Didn't they collapse in screaming "never again" acrimony, like, 15 years ago? With the two Robinson brothers subsequently putting out scads of solo albums? And semi-reuniting a few times for the occasional live LP and "unplugged" reimagining? Are they kidding? Do they think they can recapture the old fire?

Your writer approached this new set gingerly, with fingers and toes crossed. And ended up laughing and grinning. Yeah. It's that good. If 1992's *Southern Harmony And Musical Companion* was their 12-star high-water mark (hint: it was) then this new album – despite its perhaps naff title – is the best thing since. That perfect synthesis of Southern blues-rock and the best stuff that never made it onto *Exile On Main Street* is right here, like it had never left. If anything's different at all, in fact, maybe you'll hear a bit less alcohol and a bit more muscle. These guys again. (Raises glass.)

Mike Fornatale

THE BLACK KEYS
Ohio Players
★★★★

NONESUCH CD/LP

You wouldn't expect a new album from Akron's finest The Black Keys so soon after 2022's *Dropout Boogie*, but the duo is back already with album #12. An unrepentant "Party Album", it's Dan and Pat's most radical to date, distinctly modern-sounding with big choruses, synths and sparkly sonics courtesy of producer Dan The Automator.

There are many collaborations, notably lead single 'Beautiful People (Stay High)', co-written by Beck (whose 2017 album *Colors* shares similar dayglo hues), while Noel Gallagher co-pens 'On The Game'. Apparently, Alice Cooper didn't make the cut, but Wu-Tang Clan's True Master (jarringly) rocks up with some rhymes. It's unlikely to win favour with grizzled *Thickfreakness*-era fans still tutting over the Keys doing bass overdubs – but garage-blues purism aside, the tunes are some of their catchiest. 'Don't Let Me Go' could almost be their take on MoWest-era Four Seasons. Play loud.

Martin Ruddock

ALISON COTTON
Engelchen
★★★★

ROCKET RECORDINGS CD/LP

The titular little angels are Ida and Louise Cook, two sisters who helped refugees escape the horrors of Nazi persecution in the '30s. A huge love of opera was the catalyst for their mission (they would travel across Europe for concerts, creating an underground network that eventually saved many lives) so it feels perfectly right for their extraordinary story to be given proper attention through music.

First conceived for a live event, this new collection of music from The Left Outsides' Alison Cotton – who, like the Cook sisters, hails from Sunderland – does an impressive job of uncovering historical events and simultaneously let its themes speak to and of today.(Cotton reworked the spellbinding title track after conversations with refugees who now live in the UK.) Haunting *a capella* numbers intertwine with misty, droning instrumental strokes of viola, creating an atmosphere that is, fittingly, eerie and ominous, and still full of humanity.

Camilla Aisa

ELEPHANT STONE
Back Into The Dream
★★★★

FUZZ CLUB CD/LP

Back In The Dream is the sixth album from the Canadian indie-rockers fronted by Rishi Dhir, formerly of The High Dials. On this latest release, Rishi subtly blends his signature exotic Eastern-tinged sounds with a stronger emphasis on textured guitar effects.

The opening salvo of 'Lost In A Dream' and 'The Spark' are both transcendent pop-psych anthems stuffed with earworm melodies and uplifting choruses that demand repeated plays. In fact, there's hardly a dip in quality throughout, suggesting the band has pulled out all stops to produce their most cohesive and confident collection yet. The glistening harmonies on the majestic 'On Your Own' is another stand-out. Critics may write off Elephant Stone as a tame Tame Impala but these 10 dreamy soft-psych gems stand up on their own merit. Devotees of modern dream-pop will find much to relish on an immersive collection of soaring, psychedelic sonic excursions.

Paul Ritchie

WESLEY FULLER
All Fuller, No Filler
★★★★

CHEERSQUAD LP

Melbourne, Australia consistently ranks

as one of the world's most liveable cities. Adding to its appeal is that it's home to pop auteur Mr Wesley Fuller. His aviator shades and large-lapelled shirts and jackets are a good clue to where he's at musically: imagine the '70s-hued studio pop of Electric Light Orchestra and 10cc fronted by Todd Rundgren or Emmit Rhodes and you're somewhere close.

His second album lives up to the bold claim of its title, with super melodic tunes, note-perfect arrangements, and a liberal sprinkling of ear candy hooks. Search out the irrepressible melody of 'Jacaranda', a tune whose chord progression will give rhythm guitarists sleepless nights but will bring delight to lovers of quirky pop. For good measure, the 14-song set is rounded off with a cover of T Rex's 'Beltane Walk'. If that doesn't put a spring in your step you probably need to visit a podiatrist.

Duncan Fletcher

DANA GAVANSKI
Late Slap
★★★★

FULL TIME HOBBY CD/LP

In 2022 we praised Canadian-Serbian artist Dana Gavanski's break from singer-songwriter tradition, calling *When It Comes* an impressive gem with a knack for experimental abstraction. Her third LP takes things even further out, fully embracing the kaleidoscopic possibilities of wide-reaching *avant*-pop.

Through its 10 tracks, *Late Slap* flows with an endless sense of discovery – it's the kind of record that will offer different revelations (and new favourite moments) with each listen. A malleable blend of art-rock, new-wave and experimental pop that proudly contains multitudes and sees danger in playing safe ('How To Feel Uncomfortable'), these songs are nothing short of adventurous, literate and thrilling. A kinship with some of today's most inventive pop auteurs (Cate Le Bon, Aldous Harding) surely comes to mind, but perhaps a more interesting parallel is offered by cinema, more specifically by the combination of density and liberatory thrust recently seen in *Poor Things*.

Camilla Aisa

HIGH LLAMAS
Hey Panda
★★★★★

DRAG CITY CD/LP

Sean O'Hagan's valiant mission to rid the world of pop mediocrity now enters its fifth decade. Remarkable really, that someone so consistently under-appreciated can release an 11th album without having to resort to crowdfunding.

The perception that High Llamas are just a bunch of soft-rock Beach Boys revivalists is truly quashed on *Hey Panda*. Yes, many of the trademark building blocks remain in place: the scattergun arrangements, Brazilian guitar patterns, occasional string stabs, glacial female vocals, warm analogue-sounding keyboards, for instance. But this is by far their most sonically adventurous album to date: smooth old-school seductiveness meeting twisty electronic weirdness. Although bereft of obvious hits (like that matters) *Hey Panda* contains many sumptuous moments, including 'Hungriest Man', which sounds like a bonkers collision between Steely Dan and Daft Punk – with O'Hagan in fine auto-tuned voice. Ultimately though, this album keeps getting better and better with every listen, and that's a rare treasure itself.

Chris Twomey

THE HOLOGRAM PEOPLE
Isola Dei Morti Viventi
★★★★

DREAMLORD RECORDINGS CD/LP

The Hologram People's 2021 album *The Village Of The Snake God*, released on cult label Library Of The Occult, ticked many boxes for those in awe of the weirder, groovier corners of the world of vintage soundtracks and library-music, its references to Italian *giallo* scores, Schifrin-inspired funk and folk-horror storytelling hitting the mark perfectly.

Like its predecessor, *Isola Dei Morti Viventi* (*Island Of The Living Dead*) comes with a complete movie synopsis to back it up, and musically it keeps the heavy percussion and groove-heavy rhythms whilst overlaying vintage synth sounds that recall John Carpenter and Goblin's '70s scores. This means you get a beautifully conceived 35-minute journey through jazz ('Cocktail Di Zombi'), Radiophonic Workshop electronics ('Jungle Patrol') and plenty of heavy soundtrack funk ('Night Sweats', 'Worst Case Scenario') that recalls the work of Italian maestros such as Giuliano Sorgini and Rino De Filippi. A Beautifully conceived trip.

Paul Osborne

LANCASHIRE BOMBERS
No Fun No Sun
★★★

SPINOUT NUGGETS CD/LP

"Garage pop ditties" is what the press release calls the dozen songs on Lancashire Bombers' second album, and by the sounds of them that garage contains a yellow R-reg Ford Capri.

The album title nods to The Stooges' debut while the song of that name has a stuttering guitar riff similar to The Damned's 'New Rose'. 'Don't Walk Away' sounds like a stray Stranglers tune, and 'Cold At The Top' is early Jam. Wanna know what a collaboration between Pete Shelley and Peter Perrett would sound like? 'Sleep Like A Mud' has you covered. There are Dr Feelgood vibes throughout. None of which is a criticism. These short punchy tunes – only one breaches the three-minute mark – may flaunt their influences but do so without resorting to pastiche, and they muster enough authenticity that they could be smuggled onto a *Now That's What I Call Punk* anthology with nary an eyebrow being raised.

Peter Gallagher

TH' LOSIN STREAKS
Last House
★★★★★

SLOVENLY LP

Having seen this band twice, on two different continents, 16 years apart, they totally blew my eyeballs out of their sockets first time and, having eventually screwed them back in, had them blown out again on their European jaunt last year.

This, the third album from Sacramento's finest, successfully captures the excitement of one of the wildest, most incendiary, and authentic garage-punk acts you'll ever witness. Recorded at Tim Green's Louder Studios in Grass Valley, California, the guitars, drums, organ (from guest Anton Barbeau), harp and vocals are laid down raw, raucous and sufficiently tarnished. Songwriting duties are shared primarily by guitarists Tim Foster and Mike Farrell, though rhythm section Stan Tindall and Brian Machado also contribute. A blistering cover of The Weeds' 'It's Your Time' is included free of charge. Available, until they're gone, in blue or black vinyl. My advice is move fast and play loud.

Vic Templar

THE LUNAR EFFECT
Sounds Of Green And Blue
★★★★

SVART CD/LP

Hairier than a yak's moustache and louder than a pearly king's wedding suit, London quartet The Lunar Effect shove classic blues-rock through a post-grunge shredder and recombine the resulting chaos at a witch's sabbath, where surprisingly sensitive and even melodic songs emerge from the steaming cauldron.

Bludgeoning single 'Pulling Daisies' isn't entirely representative of this second album, which is characterised by slow-motion headbangers like 'Ocean Queen' that recall stoner pioneers Blue Cheer or Granicus, or doomy ballad 'Colour My World' which chimes like mid-80s Cult one moment then crunches like Earth the next. Swaggering cock-rockers 'Flowers For Teeth' and the piano-led, Hellacopters-like 'Middle Of The End' up the pace, but it's another piano showcase, the epic 'Fear Before The Fall' that shows The Lunar Effect's greatest strengths – elemental vocals, primal heaviness, dynamics of light and shade – suggesting a band that could graduate to arena status without compromising their original vision.

Ben Graham

MARK & THE CLOUDS
Machines Can't Hear You
★★★★

GARE DU NORD CD

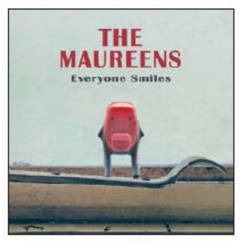
The fourth album from this pop-psych outfit is a hook-laden collection of snappy melodies and tasteful solos combining high-energy pop ('What Happened To The Future', 'Walking Dead Man') with moodier acoustic ballads ('Underground', 'What Can I Do', 'South 52 Westerly'). The trio gets heavy on 'The World Is Falling' and 'The Sun Goes Down' (featuring some gnarly Clapton-esque solos), while brass embellishments highlight 'Robotic Man' and 'Soul Of Nature.'

A whiff of acoustic Tull can be detected on 'The Cry Of The Wind', and the epic 'The Age Of Clowns' is heavy-lidded '60s psychedelia at its best, full of dreamy vocals, jazzy improvisations and languid organ and guitar solos. The ability to float seamlessly across 60 years of the rock landscape grazing in powerpop, folk, acid-rock and Britpop pastures results in an eclectic set that will please fans of all genres.

Jeff Penczak

THE MAUREENS
Everyone Smiles
★★★★

MERITORIO LP



It's fitting that The Maureens are now based on the rural east Netherlands coast as the songs on *Everyone Smiles* possess a

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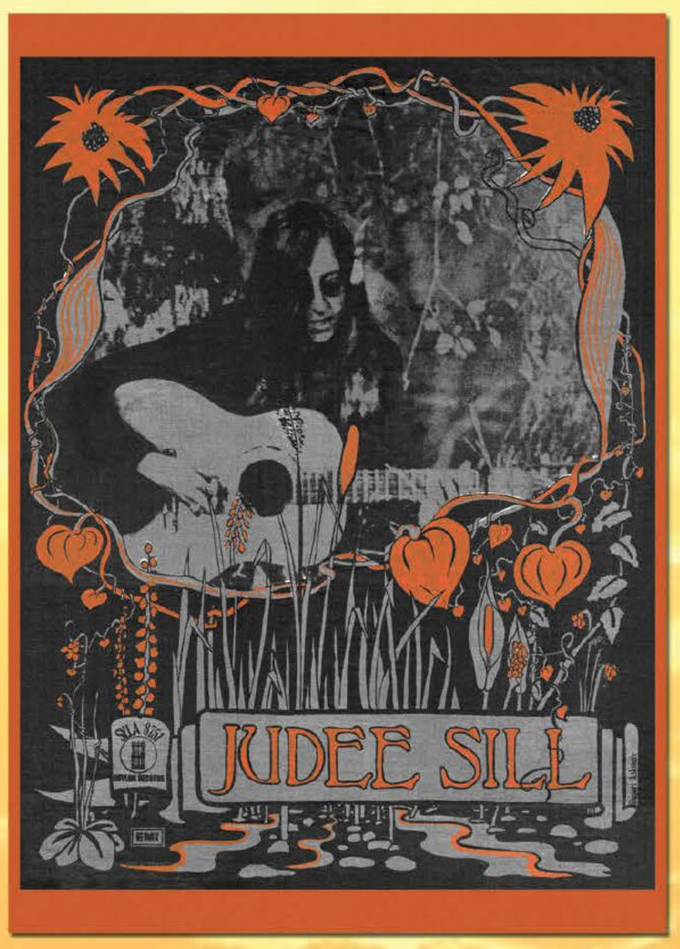
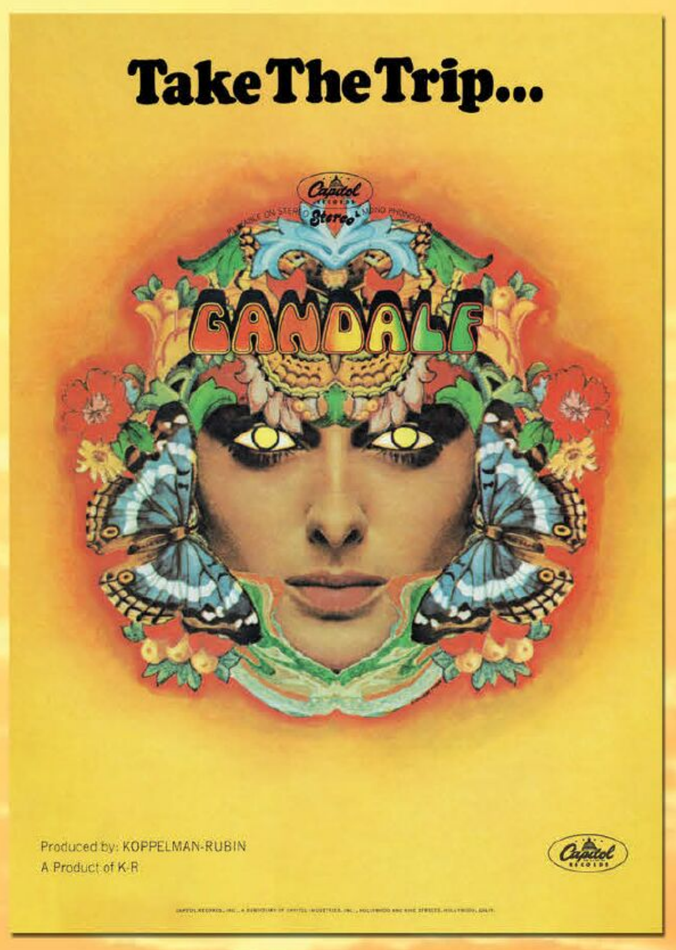
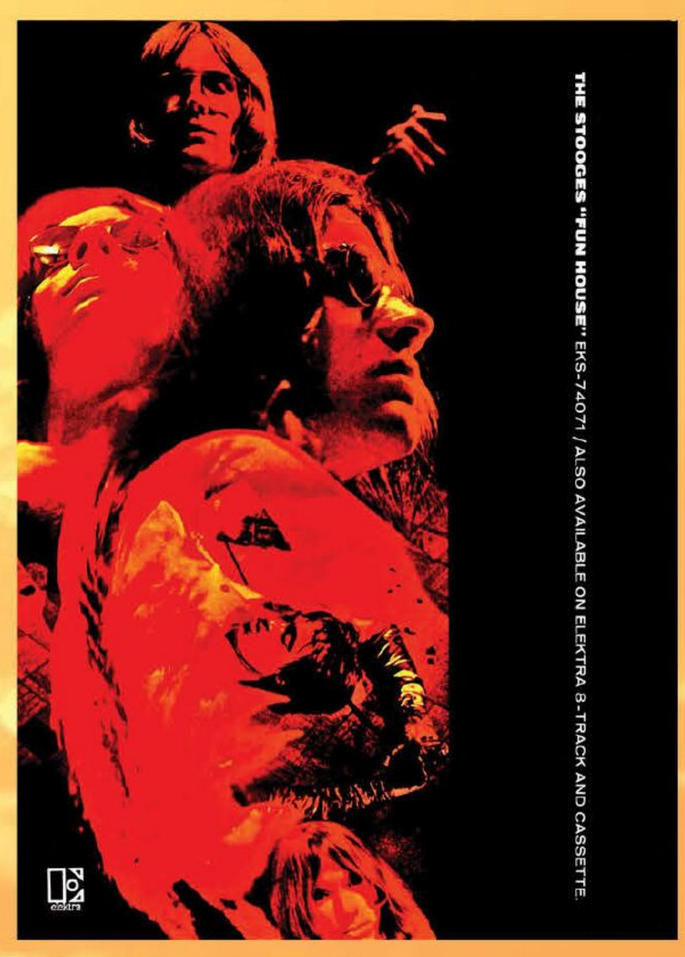
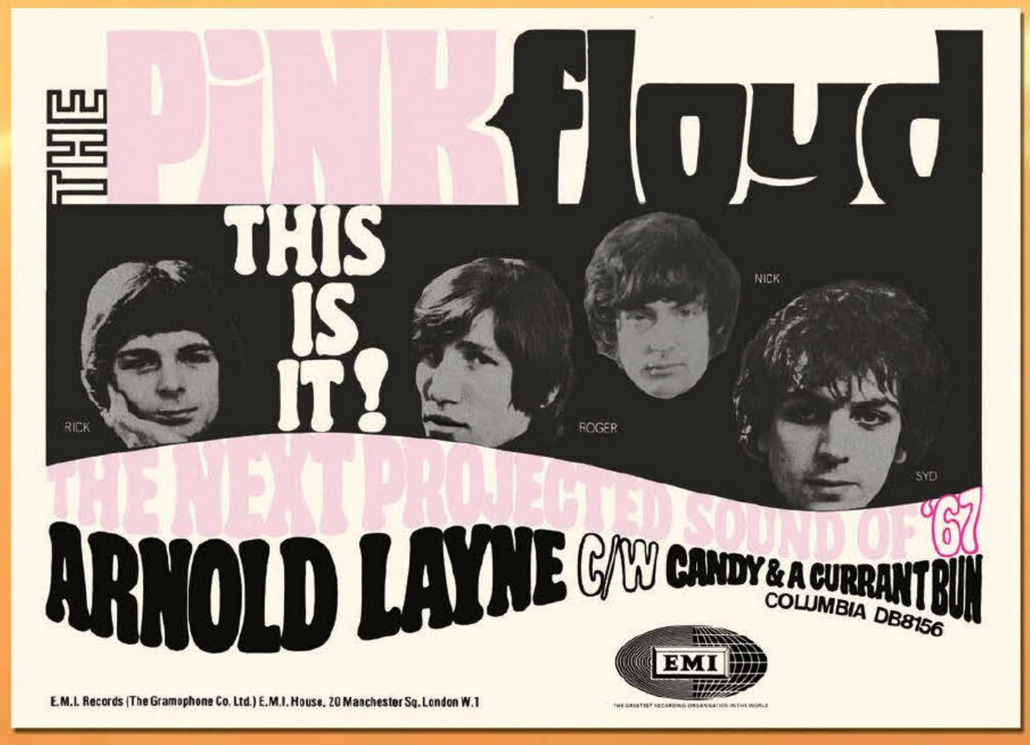
ANUBIS OF LONDON

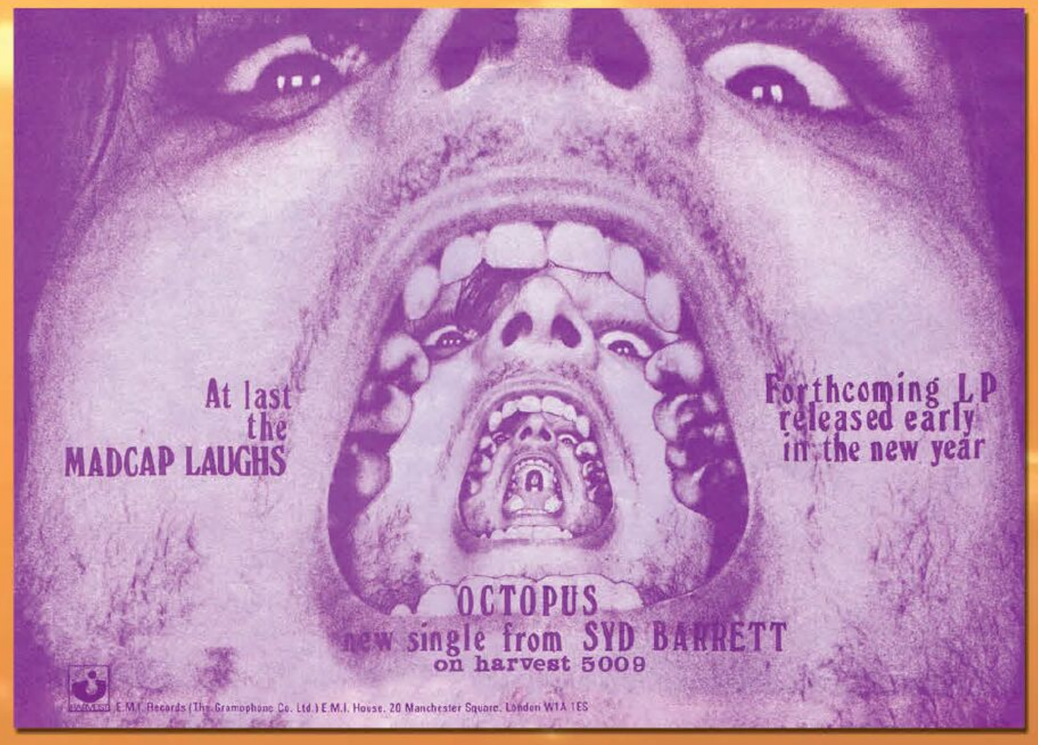
Mindblowing psychedelic posters for discerning heads

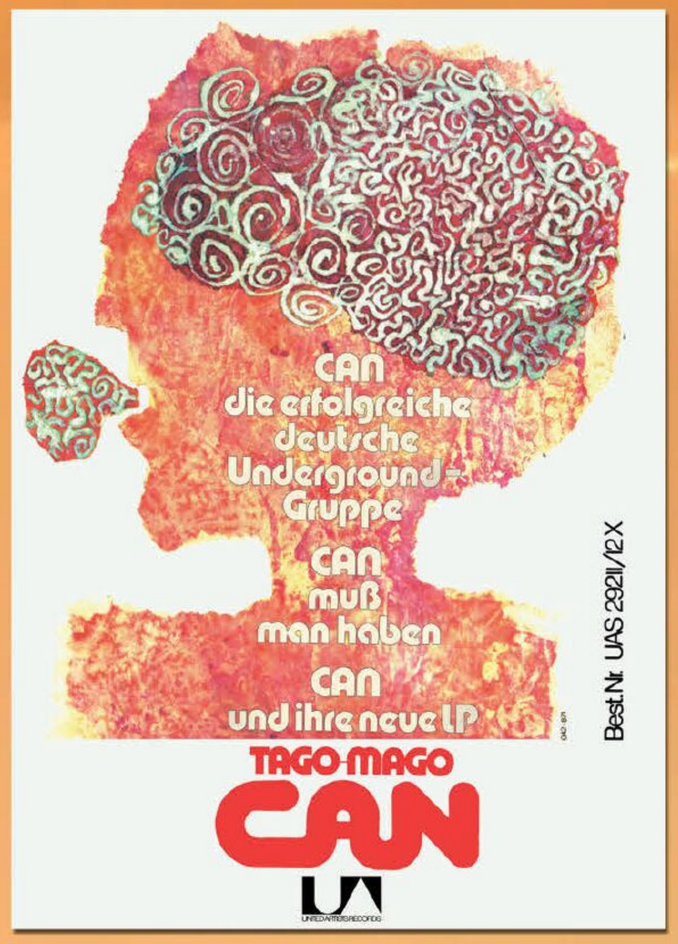


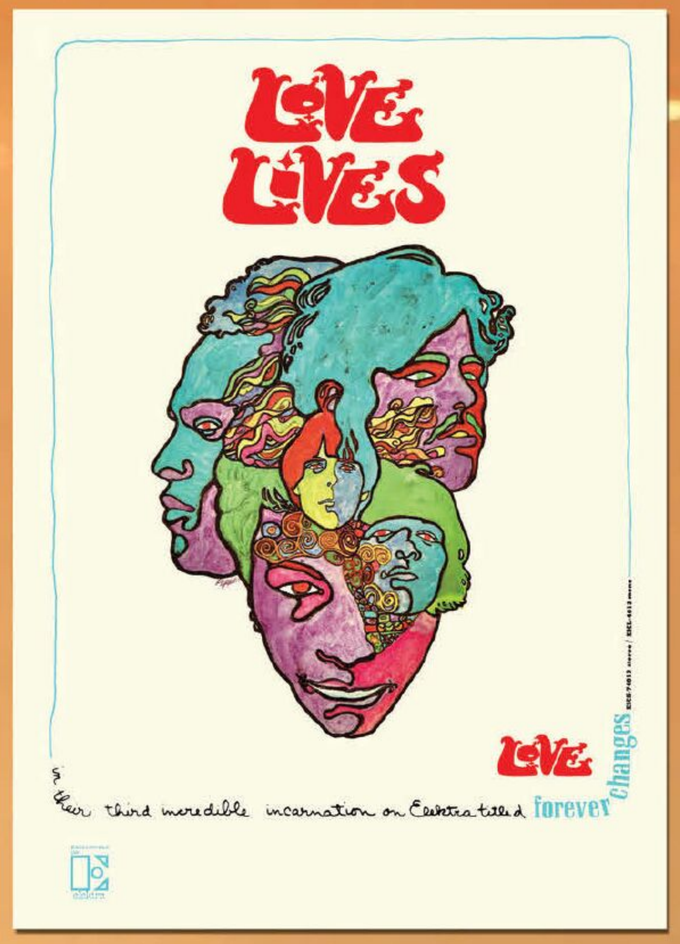


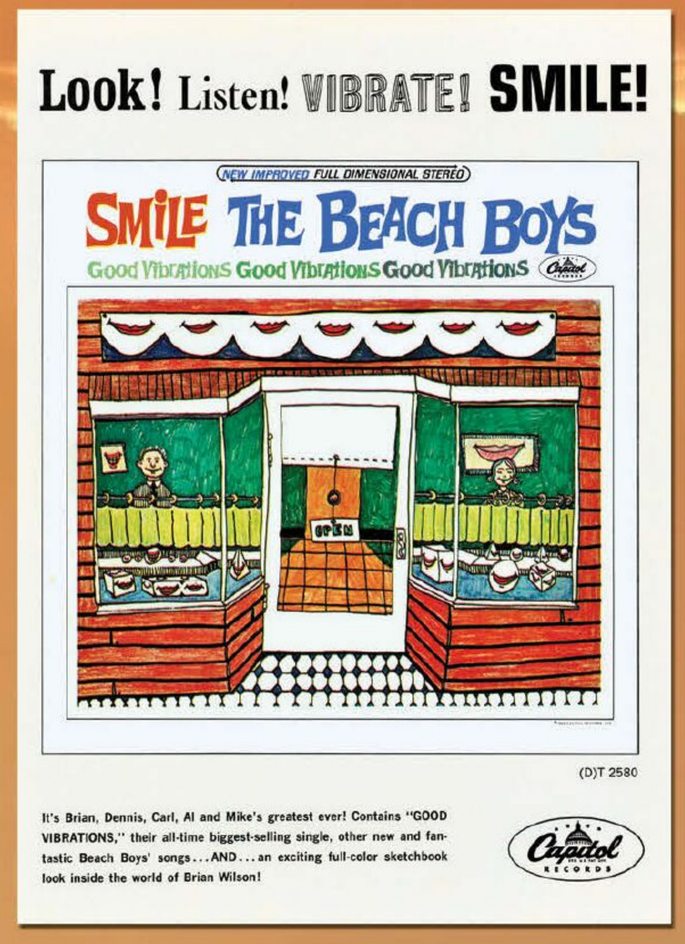












www.elvinyl.com/anubis-of-london

gazing-out-at-sea feel.

This is the band's fourth album since they formed in Utrecht over a decade ago and doesn't move the dial far from their tried and tested template – four-square instrumentation, stacked vocal harmonies floating over the strum and jangle of tastefully recorded guitars (including the occasional backwards solo). So far, so standard indie, you could say. But what raises them above the throng is the melodic nous and reflections of songwriter Hendrik-Jan de Wolff, whose rich inner life is shared across the album's 13 tracks. Fans of the Big Star/Badfinger/Teenage Fanclub strain of melancholic guitar-pop will find this so far up their street it may even share a postcode, with tracks such as 'Alison' and 'Do You?' doing their best to impersonate a long-lost Pete Ham track.

Duncan Fletcher

MAXWELL FARRINGTON & LE SUPERHOMARD

Please, Wait

★★★★

TALITRES CD/LP

The first LP by Maxwell Farrington & Le SuperHomard, 2021's *Once,* caused a stir in all the right places, showing that the pairing between the emotive crooning of the singer and the sophisticated pop of the French quintet was a match made in heaven, and led to support slots with Paul Weller himself.

Please, Wait shows that their debut was no fluke, building on the arrangements and flowing melodies of that debut, their mixture of Scott Walker's grandiose pop, classic *chanson* and a dash of The Divine Comedy's knowing humour creating musical magic, something more than apparent on opener 'The Boat', a grand, romantic gesture of a song in which you can't help but get caught up. Other highlights are the breezy pop of 'Hexagon', the rolling balladry of 'Backgammon' and the wonderful 'Tompinambur' on an album that doesn't fail to deliver on its promise.

Paul Osborne

MOOON

III

★★★★★

SOUNDFLAT CD/LP

To paraphrase the slogan of a famous beer advertisement, if *Shindig!* did albums, they would surely sound like the third album by Dutch trio Mooon.

These clearly "clued up" dudes have managed to condense a good proportion of these pages into 12 originals that are brimming with '60s references. Opener 'Rainbow Flowers' wouldn't sound out of place on The Move's debut or *The Who Sell Out* – is that a cheeky bit of Rainbow Ffolly in there too? Or maybe a hint of Nazz on the extended drum solo on the experimental 'You Cannot Know' or the trippy, pop-psych sounds of 'Mr Abelicity'? The quirky 'Richard Has A Racecar' is a hoot (check out the accompanying video for more zany antics). These lads are clearly obsessives, but it's the attention to detail that will enthral knowing heads and fans of good, old fashioned '60s flavoured pop songs. Probably the best band in the world then?

Paul Ritchie

NOVELTY ISLAND

Taped Over EP

★★★★

NINE X NINE CD/10-INCH

On previous albums *How Are You Coping With This Century?* and *Wallsend Weekend Television,* Liverpool-based Tom McConnell proved himself a master of inventive melodies, clever chord progressions, and leftfield subject matter. This latest eight-song outing, a companion piece to last year's *Wallsend*, strongly cements that reputation.

McConnell has a knack for exploring absurdity, sadness, humour, nostalgia, and pathos – often within the same song. If there's a linking theme here, it's that of childhood memories losing clarity as they're replayed and re-lived over time, akin to a much-used VHS tape. The excitement of a dog on the school field sits next to the hemmed-in inertia felt by all teenagers in their latter days in the classroom. McConnell's fondness for television culture is captured in the EP's production, designed at times to resemble the woozy wonkiness of said VHS tape. A welcome stop-gap before the next full-length album, due next year.

Duncan Fletcher

RETEP FOLO & DOROTHY MOSKOWITZ

The Afterlife

★★★★

BURIED TREASURE LP

There will be few *Shindig!* readers unfamiliar with Dorothy Moskowitz's eerie ethereal vocals – often fed through ring modulators and electric filters – heard on the sole 1968 LP by The United States Of America, a pioneering act who had a huge influence on Broadcast, Stereolab and many more. While the vast majority of artists who had their heyday in the '60s mellow with age and churn out dull and diluted pale shadows of former glories, Moskowitz, now in her mid-80s, seems to be heading ever further into the outer reaches – and sounds all the better for it.

An intense collaboration with Gothenburg-based Retep Folo (aka Peter Olof Fransson) of The Owl Service, these 14 tracks are dark and dense and *avant-garde* in the extreme. More shifting ominous soundscapes than songs, they hover, loom and lurk – and then suddenly the layered urgency dissolves into a lushness that hits like a spaced-out Francis Lai. A remarkable record.

Hugh Dellar

RICHARD E

Opening Scene

★★★★

FUTHER OUT DIGITAL

Crooning, swooning, queasy and uneasy, and that's just 'To The Moon': a subversive ballad we've not heard the likes of since Bryan Ferry started playing it straight.

The dislocated, paranoid mood increases on 'Take Me With You', featuring rubbery bass from David J (Bauhaus), who remains very much at home amid the tumbling piano and fuzz chords of off-kilter, Banshees-like rocker 'Satellite Night' and haunting chamber piece 'Flutter', also featuring Aniela Marie Perry on cello. Other guests include Mike Garson on splendidly narcotised dirge 'The Great Showing' and Magic Band guitarist Eric Klerks, who pops up throughout. The title track posits E as a post-prog polymath in the Bill Nelson mould, while 'The Future Set' could be an Evelyn Waugh novel set to a motorik pulse and jazz-rock flourishes. Ultimately though, *Opening Scene* demonstrates a broodingly sinister, consistently unique sound that's ill-served by comparisons. Art-rock for lounge lizards? Inquire within.

Ben Graham

RIDE

Interplay

★★★

WICHITA CD/LP

Nine years into their second incarnation (now officially longer than their first), on new full-length *Interplay* Ride seem eager to make peace with the past – both their own (the roaring, densely textured haze of 'Portland Rocks' looks back to the band's early days) and that of the '80s pop it wasn't exactly cool to acknowledge until now ('Monaco').

There's a style-shifting, fascinatingly moody quality to this selection of tunes – 'Stay Free' sits evenly between haunted Americana and Britpop balladry, 'Yesterday Is Just A Song' feels like an invocation shrouded in ominous electronics – and no shortage of

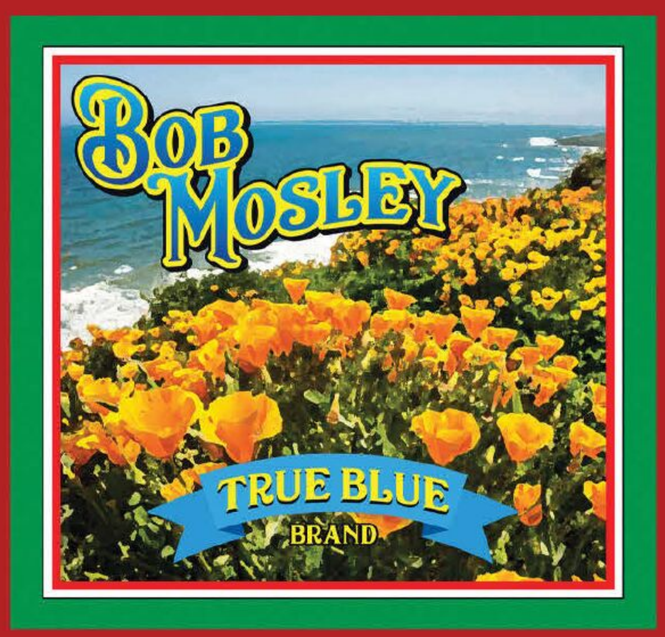
Continues over

Mooon. The extra o comes free

SteadyBoy Records Presents:

Freddie Steady's Wild Country "Lucky 7"

Reissue of the first solo record from Texas Music Hall of Famer Freddie Steady Krc. Known for his work as a founding member of Austin, TX power poppers and Roky Erickson's long-time backing band, The Explosives. Freddie pioneers the Americana music genre in 1986 while living in London. Produced by Wes McGhee. Recorded by Dave Goodman (Sex Pistols sound engineer). Freddie is joined by his musical pals in London including BJ Cole, Geraint Watkins and Bob Loveday.



Bob Mosley "True Blue"

Reissue of 2006 release from founding member of the legendary San Francisco 1960s band Moby Grape. Bob brings all self-penned compositions and his considerable talents including "that voice," bass and 6 string guitar. Accompanied by Dale Ockerman (Doobie Bros., Sons of Champlin) and James Preston (Sons of Champlin). A masterful piece of work by one of America's greatest artists and one of the coolest cats walking the planet.

Freddie Steady Krc & Eve Monsees "The Songs of Clementine Hall"

Freddie Steady teams up with Austin songstress/guitarist Eve Monsees to pay tribute to Clementine Hall. Clementine was married to Tommy Hall, principal lyricist and electric jug player of the 13th Floor Elevators. She wrote the lyrics and Roky Erickson wrote the music for two of the most beautiful songs in the Elevators catalogue. Contributing musicians include Explosives lead guitarist Cam King, Floyd Domino, Howard Kalish, Layton DePenning and Mike Buck (Fabulous Thunderbirds, LeRoi Bros.)

Official Release Date: March 8, 2024

For info on more exciting SteadyBoy Records, Freddie Steady Sound Recordings and Amazing Records releases, please visit www.steadyboyrecords.com
Roky Erickson & The Explosives, Doug Sahm, Downliners Sect, Peter Lewis, SF Charlatans, Davie Allan & The Arrows, Mike Wilhelm, Al Staehely & more!

Fruits de Mer Records

psychedelia, krautrock, prog rock, acid folk - classic, long-lost and new

SOFT HEARTED SCIENTISTS 'WALTZ OF THE WEEKEND TRIPLE LP

The Scientists are back with a stunning new album and it's their best yet, from three-minute psych to extended prog rock. Fruits de Mer presents the album as a triple LP set, with a whole LP's worth of new/extended remixes. *"...a psychedelic album that is right up there with seminal albums like The Small Faces' 'Ogden's Nut Gone Flake' and The Pretty Things' 'Parachute'..."* Dimensions In Sound And Space

THE FISHHEADS 'LOBSTER BASQUE REPLICA' LP+CD

The Fishheads return, with an album including tracks originally recorded by Pink Floyd and Mighty Baby, and a sidelong remake of 'Something's Coming', from West Side Story'! *"Feel like the Grateful Dead in full-on ' Dark Star mode"* Shindig!

DAVE McLEAN 'FAINTLY BLOWING' 8" LATHE-CUT

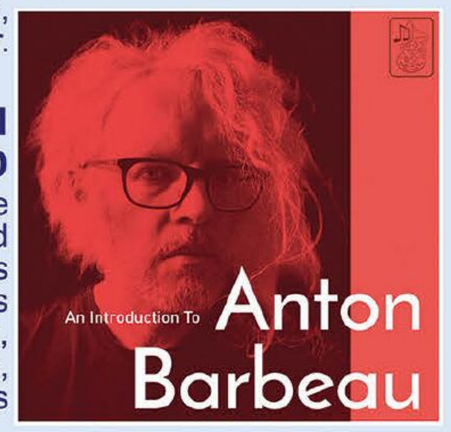
Dave McLean, from The Chemistry Set, with his first solo release, a mindbending cover of the classic 60s song by Kaleidoscope. *"huge, ambitious, heavily-charged and devastating…mind and body blowing and certainly not for the psychedelically-fainthearted"* Ian McCann, Record Collector.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HONEY POT with CRYSTAL JACQUELINE CD

Once described as Fruits de Mer's 'house band', The Honey Pot have compiled a lovely collection of tracks recorded for the label over the years - covers and original songs - plus bonus recordings that are available here for the first time.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANTON BARBEAU CD

Ant has been a great supporter for the label over the years and we've pulled together this retrospective of some of his contributions, including covers of songs written by Julian Cope, David Bowie, Robin Hitchcock, Big Star and Traffic, as well as his original songs



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memorable moments, like the driving hooks of 'Peace Sign' or the soaring 'Last Night I Went Somewhere To Dream'. But there's also a certain noughties rock slickness to the production (most clear on 'I Came To See The Wreck') and that sometimes prevents *Interplay* from fully embracing the adventurousness hinted at on tracks like 'Essaouira'.

Camilla Aisa

THE SORCERERS
I Too Am A Stranger
★★★★

ATA LP

Short review: Album three from multi-tasking trippy Ethio-jazz instrumental troupe The Sorcerers is fantastic, okay?

Oh, as it's you. The Sorcerers make a noise akin to a standoff between BadBadNotGood and Cymande. More funk than jazz, bassist (and lead composer) Neil Innes, drummer Joost Hendricks, multi-instrumentalist Richard Ormrod and their guests (Sorcerer's Apprentices, anyone?) often sound like they're scoring an obscure, bugged-out '70s crime flick. *I Too Am A Stranger* is no exception.

Whatever the plot is, it's funkier than horse shit. The opening 'He Who Kills With One Leap' simultaneously throbs with a huge breakbeat and skanking bass riff whilst throwing around buckets of soundtrack-y dread. The urgent, itchy 'Moth' comes across like Lalo Schifrin dashing off a killer theme while struggling with his air conditioning. Side Two is even funkier, with the double whammy of stake-out anthem 'The Road Forward' and the snakey, elusive 'Oromo Moon'. Magic.

Martin Ruddock

STRANGE MAJIK
NYC Animal
★★★

BANG BANG BOOGALOO LP

Rock 'n' roll lifer David Pattillo aka Strange Majik is a respected fixture of the New York rock scene, earning plaudits for his live residencies and records alike. His latest LP is a paean to his adopted home city, homing in on the pre-gentrification danger encapsulated by Lou, Iggy, and sticky floor dives such as CBGB's. With a touch of Y2K indie sleaze and some nightclub grooves Pattillo has crafted a sound drenched in nocturnal, hedonistic vibes.

Despite the NYC references it's the guitar playing of Experience-era Jimi Hendrix that serves as Pattillo's main influence. Seattle's favourite son even gets a birthday shout out on 'HBD Jimi'. In addition to the rock-fuelled party tracks there are deeper moments: 'Nomadic Girl' throws Arabic scales into the mix, 'Black Lashes' is mysterious and dreamy with its smoky violin, while 'Catalina' is a tender soulful love song. Some softening yin to the record's hedonistic yang.

Duncan Fletcher

SULA BASSANA
Reisen
★★★★

SULATRON LP

Sula Bassana is David Schmidt. Fully immersed in the world of psychedelia, Dave has been tripping the light fantastic for the best part of 40 years, first as part of electronic duo Solaris before moving on to psych-rock. And Schmidt continues to be a musical gadfly – forming bands, joining bands and leaving bands, all the while assembling an enviable solo output as alter ego Sula Bassana.

And *Reisen* is a solo record in every sense. Not only does Schmidt play all instruments including Farfisa Syntorchestra (!), Moog, Mellotron, drumbox and sequencer, but this latest album has been released on his longstanding psych-oriented record label Sulatron. Formed of just two tracks – the first 'Shusie's Reise' dedicated to a friend who passed away – *Reisen* is a one-sitting listen, a transcendent cosmic journey that takes in Tangerine Dream-esque electronic soundscapes all the way through to drone-centred neo-psych space-rock. A psychedelic smorgasbord. Marvellous.

Sarah Gregory

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Under The Bridge 2
★★★★

SKEP WAX CD/2-LP

Who'd have imagined that, of all the late-80s-early-90s rock and rollers, the supposed delicate flowers of C86 would prove to be some of the hardiest? But here they are, nearly four decades on, as bright-eyed and optimistic as ever.

Most of the artists here come from the Sarah Records stable, scarred veterans of the indie wars, yes, but with their enthusiasm for the new and the shiny undimmed, forever on the quest for that perfect pop song. Highlights are the Jam-hit-that-never-was 'Just Who Are The Cockleshell Heroes?' by Action Painting! and 'Alone Tonight', a dusty mirrorball ballad from Skep bosses Amelia Fletcher and Rob Pursey's The Catenary Wires. There's a pick 'n' mix variety here – Jetstream Pony's 'Look Alive' conjures the spirit, sound and smells of The Camden Falcon while Useless Users' grandiose soundtrack imagines a spaghetti western set in the Bristol suburbs. Have any Sarah bands found that flawless diamond of a tune yet? Perhaps not, but they're having a lot of fun searching.

Kate Hodges

JANE WEAVER
Love In Constant Spectacle
★★★★★

FIRE CD/LP

By now Jane Weaver has patented a sound that is both continually changing and instantly recognisable, a blend of synth-fuelled psych, spellbinding hauntology and dream-pop with an *avant* flair that, record after record, has proved endlessly fascinating.

Love In Constant Spectacle finds Weaver reuniting with co-producer John Parish and delivering what might very well be her finest selection of songs to date. Brilliantly moody from start to finish, the album achieves a balance that's quite remarkable: it aligns itself with the surrealistic and the abstract, embraces their openness, and still produces something that is, first and foremost, an utter pleasure to listen to and immerse oneself in. Some of Weaver's strongest tracks are offered here: the dreamy, lethargic catchiness of the post-Stereolab incantation that is 'Emotional Components' or the title track, which struts in with Bowie-like shimmer, are but two highlights. A multi-layered, enchanting treasure.

Camilla Aisa

THE WYLDE TRYFLES
Outta Tyme
★★★★

SOUNDFLAT LP

Third long-playing disc for this Bordeaux-based combo. Like some of the younger groups fixated on '60s sounds, The Wylde Tryfles – fronted by female group member Lubna Bangs – have a strong identity and image as well as a keen sense of how to create pulsating, hypnotically thrilling garage sounds. The thumping bass and drums, a veritable wasps' nest of fuzz, fabulous mysterioso organ and Lubna's powerful snarl and scream lead vocals make them genuine high-flying denizens of the modern scene.

An innate sense of rock 'n' roll fun is also evident; plus the boundless reserves of energy spiling forth from every groove. Everything is pretty full-on, with hardly a moment to catch your breath; leaving the listener drained yet wanting more. Although 1966 is firmly stamped on their hearts and minds, *Outta Tyme* is nonetheless one hell of a raw garage-punk statement made for today's generation. Stand-outs include 'One And One Make Two', 'Out Of Tyme' the superb opener 'Can't Get Enough Of Your Love'.

Lenny Helsing

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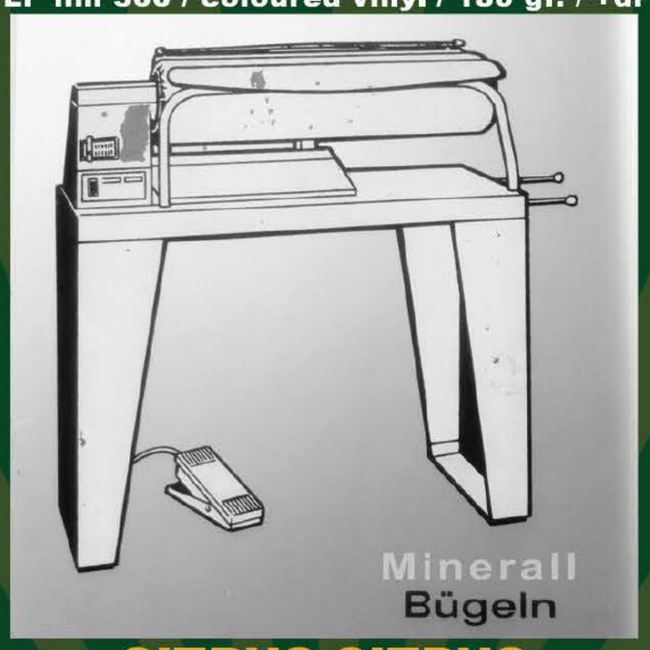

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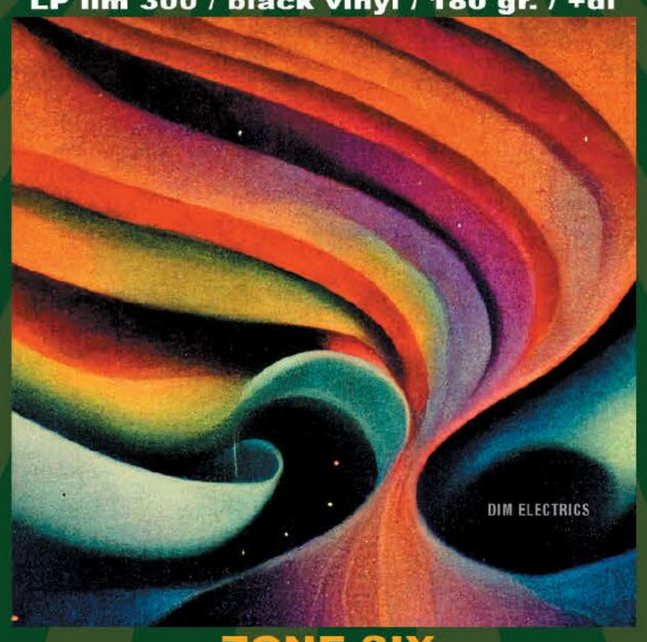

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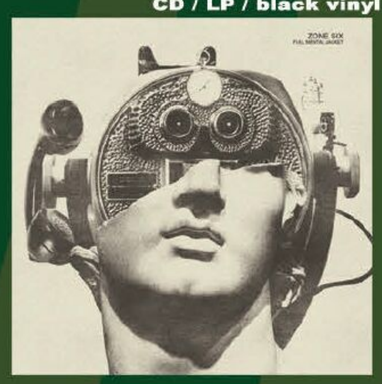

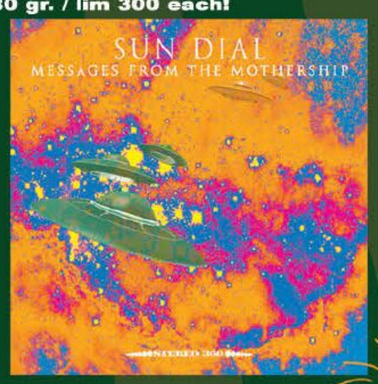

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BROKENSILENCE

Andy Smythe
Poetry in Exile

'Psychedelic and sporadically spacy pop occupying the middle ground between the Beatles, Bowie and Buckley... stunningly rendered.. Andy Smythe strikes aural gold'
AnR magazine

'Breathing new life into the Britpop genre.. this talented artist is set to make waves on the music scene'
IndieGrid

'With the powerful song-writing skills of Paul McCartney and the poignancy of Jeff Buckley, Andy Smythe ensnares people's senses with his enigmatic music'
The Other Side Reviews

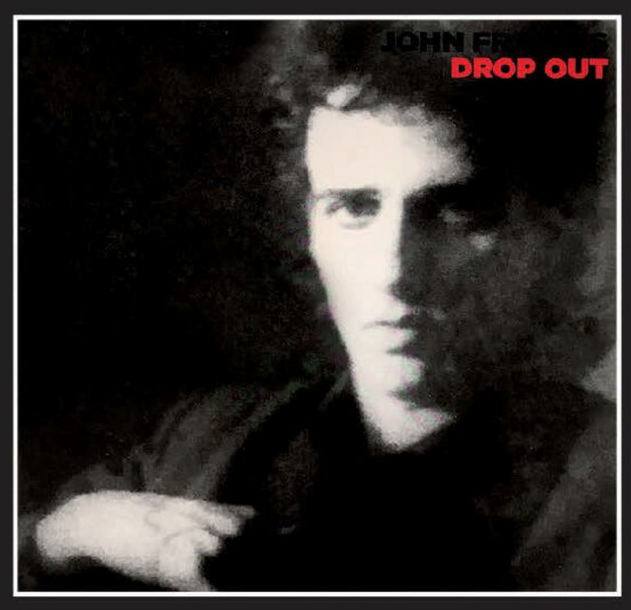
New album: ***'Poetry in Exile'*** out on March 1st

New single: ***'Leaves to Burn'*** out March 1st

On all good streaming and download platforms

Available from: https://andysmythe.bandcamp.com/
Tour dates on: www.andysmythe.com

JOHN FRANCIS
DROP OUT



Influenced by glam rock and punk rock (Main influence - Lou Reed)

John Francis albums:
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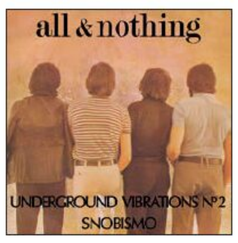
reviews 45s

ALL & NOTHING
Underground Vibrations No 2 / Snobismo
★★★★

MUNSTER



Formed as a studio project by the journalist and producer José Luis Álvarez, All & Nothing never performed live and only released two 45s during their short existence. Despite that, original copies of this, their debut 45, change hands for serious money these days and it's recognised as a classic from the first stirrings of the '70s Andalusian underground scene.

'Underground Vibrations No 2' – and before you ask, there's no sign of a No 1 anywhere – is nigh-on six minutes of psych-tinged heavy funk-rock. Kicking off with a twin English-language vocal announcing how good the singers feel, there's then an explosion and a segue into a totally different drum-and-bass-driven groove. A choppy wah-wah guitar gets added to the mix and there's then a classically infused keyboard excursion reminiscent of The Nice. Then we're back where we started. The instrumental flip is more of the same funky organ-led freak-rock too.

Hugh Dellar

THE ASTEROID NO 4
Tremble EP
★★★★

SILVER ARROW

This San Francisco psychedelic quartet are the latest members of Chris Robinson's brotherhood of like-minded artists signed to his Silver Arrow imprint. Nearly two-dozen releases (including 2013's brilliant collaboration with Kaleidoscope singer Peter Daltrey, *The Journey*) into their 25-year career finds them in familiar territory mixing noisy pop earwigs with shoegaze overtures and the occasional dreamy pop come-down to settle the grey matter in between trips.

Shrieking guitars are set to stun for the heart-pounding 'Dandelion' but song structures and melodic hooks are never sacrificed for pyrotechnics. 'Sky Blue' is particularly catchy and the wobbly fuzz bomb 'Bad Fruit' is simultaneously hypnotic and unsettling, *a la* Brian Jonestown Massacre, Sun Dial and vintage Spacemen 3. The chiming guitars and marshmallow overcoat of closer 'Holly Hock Way' envelop the listener in a wall of shimmering echoes that encourages repeat listens and leave us eager for the next full-lengther.

Jeff Penczak

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

BIG BOSS MAN
Das Freak / Das Freak (version)
★★★★

SPINOUT NUGGETS

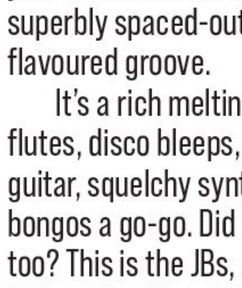
Big Boss Man, led by Nasser Bouzida (aka The Bongolian), are veterans of groovy '60s-flavoured instrumentals. They debuted with *Humanize* on Blow Up back at the turn of the millennium. Now signed to Spinout Nuggets, the group follows up last year's 'Do The Backstroke' single with a superbly spaced-out, modern disco-flavoured groove.

It's a rich melting pot with funky flutes, disco bleeps, swirling wah-wah guitar, squelchy synths and uber rhythmic bongos a go-go. Did I mention funky horns too? This is the JBs, James Last, Booker T, Dee-Lite, *Starsky & Hutch* and all their mates getting on down. The good vibes are infectious. You get two slightly different versions of the same song on this limited 45; both are guaranteed floor fillers. 'Das Freak' is the perfect pick me up and is lifted from the eagerly anticipated forthcoming album, *Bossin' Around*. Freak out!

Paul Ritchie

THE COURETTES
Shake! / You Woo Me
★★★★

DAMAGED GOODS



The hardest working duo in show business have managed to squeeze in some precious recording time in between their seemingly endless globe-trotting to record a new album of revved-up, '60s garage stompers. The first fruits can be heard on this limited-edition seven-inch single.

'Shake!' is everything you should expect from the duo: frivolous, hip shaking fun, and up there with their finest work and bodes well for the new album. Plenty of fuzz guitar riffs, Farfisa organ and pounding drums. Flipside 'You Woo Me' is exclusive to this release and is a bolshy slice of garage-soul meets girl-group sass. If The Courettes are not coming to a town near you soon, you can bet your bottom dollar they're not too far away. Don't pass up the opportunity if they come your way. In the meantime, spin this single for maximum thrills and spills.

Paul Ritchie

THE EMERGENCY STAIRS
That's The Way Lyfe Is EP
★★★★

RAVING POP BLAST

French one-man band Achille Brunet has been releasing material online for a few years now, graduating to compilation appearances and very limited edition vinyl singles in recent times, but this striking four-song EP is his first shot for a label outside of his own orbit. Those who've heard the likes of The Naives, David & The Lynched and the myriad other monikers AB goes under will know that this enthusiastic youngster writes, plays and records everything himself, staying largely within the realms of trashy rock 'n' roll garage, with a special emphasis that relates to the ethos behind the *Back From The Grave* series.

Within the quartet of sonic epistles we find here, the title cut is a superb stab at lo-fi garage, but the equally primitive, no fuss teen-punk clamour of 'Walkin' Side By Side With You' is even more of a stand-out. It's party time over on the second side with 'Welcome To Bunker Hill' a real Bobby Fuller Four-style treat.

Lenny Helsing

FOGBOUND
Garden Of The Unseen / When The Drug Kicks In
★★★★

MAGIC MOUNTAIN

A decade after their debut 45, A Coruña's Fogbound are back together and still steeped in the British psychedelic sounds of the late '60s.

'Garden Of The Unseen' throbs and pulsates from the off, its otherworldly church organ tones, ringing clattering guitar and driving bass occasionally submerged beneath cymbal wash, layers of phasing and studio trickery. The vocals are low down in the mix, almost like echoes in your head, and the song finally dissolves into half a minute of swirl and sirens and Syd's 'Bike'-like sounds. 'When The Drug Kicks In' is less immediately urgent, but similarly subterranean in its sonic palette.

The minimal liminal organ lines ooze over the track and almost drown it in a strange reverberation that's amplified by the distant treated guitars. The kind of record that Kula Shaker and Temples would like to imagine they make, but they really don't. Or can't.

Hugh Dellar

THEE HEART TONES
Forever & Ever / Sabor A Mi
★★★

BIG CROWN

The Chicano soul scene is awash with young groups performing modern variations of classic soul and R&B.

'Forever & Ever' is a classy single by this young band from Hawthorne, California, led by the soft, heavenly vocal of Jazmine Alvarado. Produced by Leon Michels (El Michels Affair) and Tommy Brenneck (ex-Dap-Kings), 'Forever & Ever' is a sublime sweet soul ballad that harks back to the early days of R&B. Remarkably, the band are all aged under 20 years of age but under the guidance of these two renowned taste-makers they've conjured up a delicate slice of whimsical retro soul with an understated groove of organ and clipped guitar. The flip is a soulful cover of 'Sabor A Mi' ('Taste Of Me'), a 1959 bolero originally penned by Álvaro Carrillo. If you like those recent Penrose 45s from Thee Sacred Souls and The Altons, you'll dig this one.

Paul Ritchie

IT'S ALL MEAT
Feel It / Commitment
★★★★

MILKCOW

Even in an era where subtlety had essentially given way to explicit taboo-breaking, deciding to call your band It's All Meat and then releasing a debut 45 called 'Feel It' took, ahem, real balls. As it were. Despite its major label release on Columbia back in 1969, original copies are now as rare as a sheep with five feet and the sole Discogs offering is up for more than two grand, all of which means a reissue makes real sense.

Older readers quite possibly first encountered the track way back at the dawn of the '80s when it appeared on *Pebbles Volume 9* – and it still kills. With a monstrous riff that's reminiscent of The Guess Who's 'It's My Pride', these Toronto punks created pure dancefloor ferocity and fire here. Flip it over and get a real surprise: a boss Dylan-flecked folk-punk cut with a searing fuzz solo.

Hugh Dellar

SUSAN JAMES
Time Is Now / Only In America
★★★★

MURMURATIONS

It's been nine years since Susan James' *Sea Glass* wowed us here at *Shindig!*, and five since it was given a limited vinyl reissue by British label Sunstone. Expectations are high for May's follow-up and, while we rub our hands in anticipation, here's the trailer 45 pairing two tracks from the album.

Fans of *Sea Glass* will at once recognise the sonic palette of 'Time Is Now': James' warm, smoky voice (a space-age Carly Simon, perhaps?) over multi-layered guitars and analogue keys that introduce a chipper chorus recalling prime Stereolab (Sean O'Hagan is a collaborator) and a surprise central psych-out/breakdown section.

'Only In America' is social commentary presented as swinging '60s jazz, complete with a choir of Susans in full-on Swingles Singers mode. If this is an indication of the standard of the album, then we should buckle up and prepare to be wowed once again.

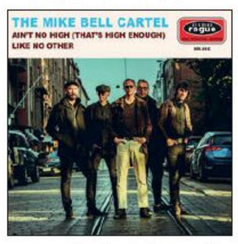
Andy Morten

MATTHEW EDWARDS & THE FUTURISTS
Suit / Kindness
★★★★
LAST TAPE RECORDINGS

The Futurists we're talking about are not members of an *avant-garde* movement with a penchant for cars and onomatopoeia but an evolution of the Unfortunates, a previous outfit led by Matthew Edwards. A Birmingham native now playing music in San Francisco, Edwards made his debut with the Futurists four years ago with an EP titled *The 1st Song Of The Revolution*.

A new 45 now follows, offering two nice slices of British trad-rock reimagined from The City That Knows How. The beautiful cover design is a homage to pop-art and reveals that the Futurists are perfectly comfortable with past and present: 'Kindness' feels like a gentle anthem for a better today while showing a classicist sound that's free, sweet and easy. 'Suit' is a more insistent affair that alternates a contemplative jangle with nods to the Stones, keeping the song perfectly suspended between the UK and California.
Camilla Aisa

THE MIKE BELL CARTEL
Ain't No High (That's High Enough) / Like No Other
★★★
DISQUES ROGUE



Despite having a name that's redolent of that of an obscure south London mod-soul combo from 1965, The Mike Bell Cartel actually hail from Helsinki, and are very much in the here and now. Having already released one single on Beluga and a debut LP two years back, they're a great addition to this French label's already impressive roster.

'Ain't No High (That's High Enough)' is a straightforward catchy garage punker – a fuzz-and-Farfisa intro, some slightly inept drum battery, a sneering lead singer, "ba-ba-ba" backing vocals, and nothing as technical (or vulgar) as a guitar solo to ruin the 106-second blast. The flip is a whole minute longer and has far more of a vulnerable jangling teen folk-punk sound, recalling The Fantastic Dee-Jays and no-count obscuros that make up comps like *Byrds Won't Fly Today*. Despite the fragile vocals, there's still a brief fuzz burst mid-song.
Hugh Dellar

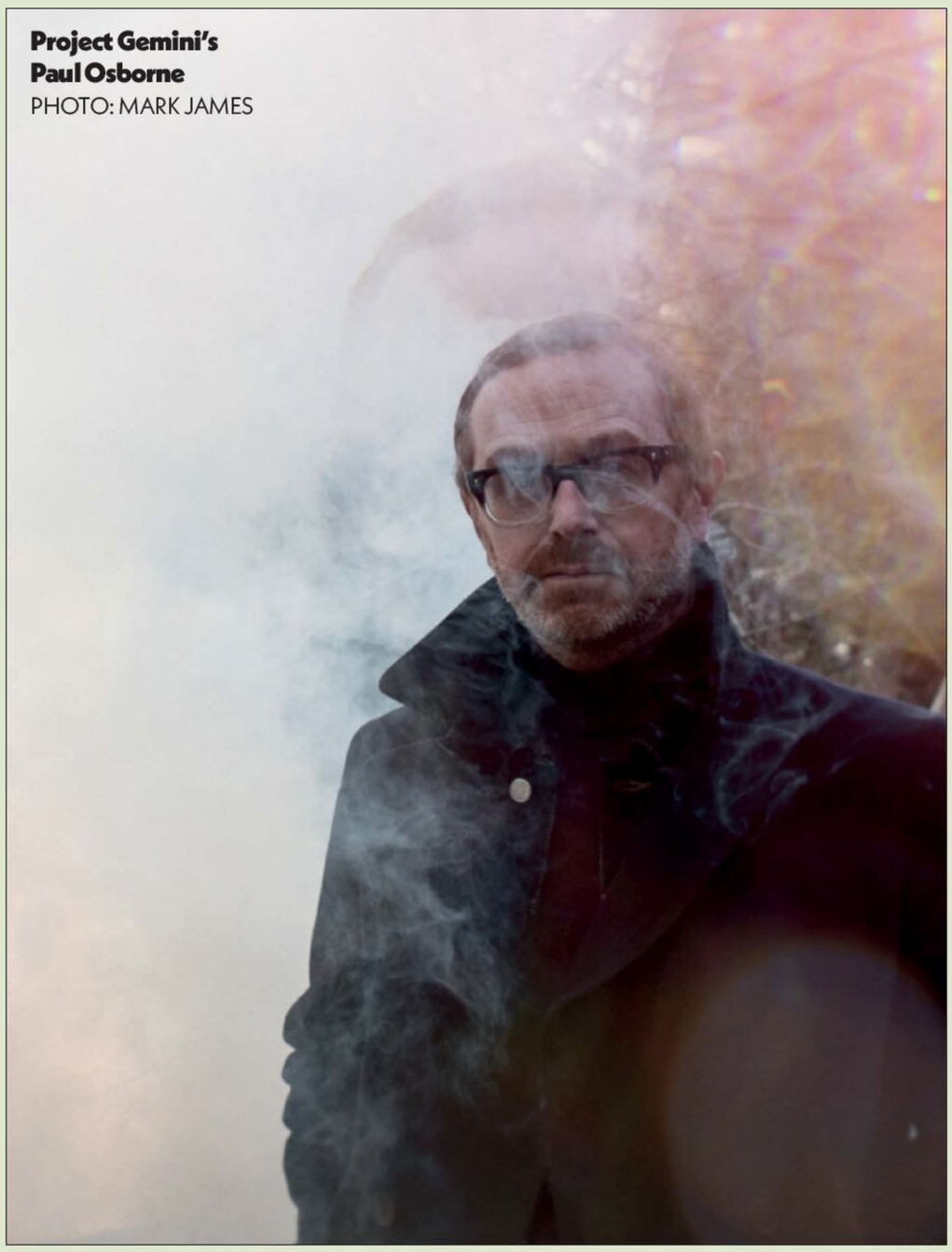
THE MOURNING AFTER
Lately / Quit Bazaar
★★★★
DISQUES ROGUE

Latest in the continuing 45 revolution stakes from Sheffield's dyed-in-the-wool garage-rock practitioners The

Continues over

tracks

CAMILLA AISA rounds up this month's digital downloads and stray oddities



Project Gemini's Paul Osborne
PHOTO: MARK JAMES

PROJECT GEMINI (aka *Shindig!* family member Paul Osborne) shares '**Colours & Light**', his forthcoming second LP's title track: rhythmic roots in a Pentangle fave (a 1973 live rendition of 'Wedding Dress'), haunting East-West psychedelic grooves and a fuzztastic Jack Sharp solo on top. Perfectly delicious.

From mind trips to actual aural travelling: we fly towards Indonesia to find **LAIR**, a group making funky psych informed by local performance art tradition Panturan Tarling. '**Tatalu**' is an arresting piece with a celebrative heart, where driving electric guitars are paired with instruments made of terracotta (of which the band's city, Jatiwangi, once was the country's largest producer).

Great news for fans of **SIX ORGANS OF ADMITTANCE** and, in particular, Ben Chasny's acoustic playing. A new album is on the way, and lead single '**The Mission**' is a spellbinding foretaste. Inspired by stories told by a friend finding love in a new country, the song brims with fresh love's sense of wonder, and is at once warm and unearthly.

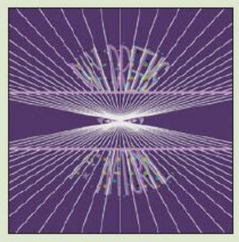
After curating a tribute album to all-time hero Michael Chapman, West Yorkshire native **HENRY PARKER** offers '**Meanwood Valley Tanneries**', a charming single with a history-loving heart. Parker travels back centuries to sing of the tanning industry of Leeds, bringing back a tune that evokes classic Albion folk as well as Ryley Walker's early releases.

Here's another gifted music maker with feet firmly planted in Blighty's folk tradition. You will know **LAVINIA BLACKWALL** as Trembling Bells' frontwoman and one half of Wyndow, but her solo work (with Stilton) is equally captivating. '**Morning To Remember**' blends Kate Bush-like baroque and infectious psych-pop escapism in one ornate, lovely go.

A strong, enlightening connection to deep-rooted musical traditions, combined with vigorous political engagement, is what made supergroup **LES AMAZONES D'AFRIQUE** one of the most powerful and recognisable forces in modern African music. Now the collective ventures even further – '**Flaws**', with its embrace of electronic sounds and pop danceability, is all about defying borders.

When he's not busy producing indie-rock jewels made by friends (like Big Thief and Palehound), **SAM EVIAN** records his own songs in a studio immersed in the nature of the Catskill mountains. He also uses vintage gear from the mid-70s, something that just makes perfect sense as you listen to the utterly delightful soft rock breeziness of '**Wild Days**'.

Meet **GGLUM**, aka London-born 21-year-old songwriter Ella Smoker. Her debut album is out at the end of March, unveiling tunes that sit evenly between contemporary introspective songwriters and lo-fi dream-pop. '**Glue**' adds a '90s indie kick to the mix, with instantly captivating results.



Fellow lovers of super pop have another debut album to spend some quality time with. **DAY DREEMS** is an artist whose first LP balances wit, acumen and Beatles-loving melody with the kind of innate flair that can only make us instant fans. '**F Natural**' is a perfect showcase of their gift: a hummable gem warning against the dangers hidden behind nature-should-always-prevail mindsets.

Ready for things to get seriously groovy? We surely are, as **BACAO RHYTHM & STEEL BAND** send us straight to the nearest dancefloor (imaginary or real, your choice) through the driving power of, yes, steel pan drums! '**Grilled**' celebrates the simple pleasures of summer with sonic echoes of vintage sci-fi. A soundtrack for real good times.

With last year's deluxe reissue of *Overcome By Happiness* still on the turntable, we're pleased to blast a new **PERNICE BROTHERS** beauty through our headphones. '**Who Will You Believe**' has all the makings of a Joe Pernice classic: exquisite melody, jangly guitars, generous harmonies, and a chorus that puts a smile on your face while simultaneously making you tear up.

Who says the musical needs of motorists should exclusively be attended to by mainstream country? **LUKE OF ULYSSES**, former frontman of, you guessed it, Ulysses, takes his first solo single as an opportunity to muse over '**Car Trouble**'. Think '80s powerpop with some glam swagger sprinkled on top, and Jeff Lynne's blessing.

Mourning After and it's a swinging double-decker from start to finish.

'Lately' features a signature melodic fuzz motif in pole position with the group driving the whole thing forwards. A cool 'My Friend Jack'-style string-scraping descent is followed by a chorus-style breakdown; the two events lending the song some breathing space. There's also a slight suggestion of some mod-in-the-garage *a la* The Prisoners in one or two of Chris Blackburn's vocal exhortations here. On the flip, they further tease with a fiery slice of teenbeat go-go garage they've called 'Quit Bazaar' – not sure why it's quit and not quite, maybe an in-joke or something? Anyhow, this one will also have your head nodding and your toes a-tapping in no time at all. Comes in moody, full colour group shot on the cover. Get with it now!

Lenny Helsing

THE PRISONERS

Don't Burst My Bubble / Ain't No Telling

★★★★

COUNTDOWN

As excitement builds around the release of The Prisoners' first album in 38 years, their former label Countdown dusts off two cover versions for this unique new pairing.

The Small Faces' 'Don't Burst My Bubble' (itself a long-unheard 1967 out-take) was captured during demo sessions for The Prisoners' '86 outing *In From The Cold* but was passed over and not heard until it opened Countdown's *Smashing Time* sampler the following year. To these ears, it would've been a better fit than the slightly uptight version of The Jimi Hendrix's Experience's 'Ain't No Telling' that did make the album (the demo is superior). Either way, they're both dancefloor-friendly cuts that suit the 45 format and, given the absence of any Pretty Things or Nice covers in The Prisoners' archive, illustrate the group's key influences perfectly.

Andy Morten

TRAFFIC SOUND / BLACK SUGAR

La Camita / La Camita

★★★★

VAMPISOUL

Here's a tale of two sides and two contrasting yet complimentary takes on a particularly seductive Latin groover from two vintage Peruvian acts of note.

First Traffic Sound's punchy and ultra-catchy 1971 original version of 'La Camita' with its unmistakably strident Santana-esque guitar sound, spacey flourishes of flute and totally on the money strutting tempo. Compressed into a playing time shy of the three-minute mark, if there's any downside here it's just that the magic is all over way too soon. Released in '78 as Black Sugar's final single, their lengthier and more laidback take on 'La Camita' offers a real stylistic contrast thanks to its slicker production values and a smoother, more soulfully funky sound. With its relaxed tempo, cooler vibe, sweet as honey vocals and a preponderance of stylishly layered horns, Black Sugar remodel the Traffic Sound original with a lip-smacking surplus of Latin soul.

Grahame Bent

TRAUM

Hold The Line / Sunshine Song

★★★

HYPNOTIC BRIDGE

German three-piece Traum's inaugural release leaves no doubt as to where their hearts lie. 'Hold The Line' follows the tremoloed string-scratch from The Smoke's 'My Friend Jack' with a melody cribbed from Fire's 'Father's Name Is Dad' before a slightly more elliptical and explosive chorus. The vocals are dreamy and distant; the guitars snaky and sinuous. 'Sunshine Song' is almost a reprise of the topside; the chords and chromatic melody are practically the same, but this time there's Mellotron and double-tracked wah-wah lead.

Assured as the performances are, it's impossible to know whether Traum have any ideas of their own in the face of such slavish (albeit authentic and bespoke) homages to those Tintern Abbey, Tickle and Fresh Windows 45s. Let's see if they summon their own sunshine next time.

Andy Morten

WILD BILLY CHILDISH & THE CHATHAM SINGERS

Troubled Mind / Ranscombe Farm Boogie

★★★★

SPINOUT NUGGETS

Sounding for all the world like a tailor-made anthem for our angst-ridden times, 'Troubled Mind', a favourite of both Thee Headcoats and The Buff Medways, is presented here in an authentically unfussy version recorded live "at home" on a vintage Revox tape machine – "home" here feeling rather more akin to the back room of a smoky juke joint on the south side of Chicago than a suburban dwelling in darkest Chatham.

Meanwhile, on the flip the raucously in the red instrumental 'Ranscombe Farm Boogie' comes to you from the *Kings Of The Medway Delta* album and could pass for an out-take from Buddha-era Captain Beefheart & The Magic Band. Needless to say, Billy Childish – the king of the Medway bluesmen – friends possess all the requisite savvy and conviction to carry off their excursions deep into the land of vintage bluesification with real style.

Grahame Bent

THE BEACH BOYS BY THE BEACH BOYS

Brian, Carl & Dennis Wilson, Al Jadine, Mike Love & Bruce Johnston

★★★★★

GENESIS PUBLICATIONS

So, what could possibly be left to say about one of the most forensically examined and documented bands in American history? Well, let's ask them.

Incredible to think this is the first time all the original band members have collaborated on a definitive book project (some posthumously of course), especially because, over the years, we've been bombarded with individual autobiographies – each toeing a political line in this often deeply divided family enterprise. This time they're all commentating on their extraordinary career in real time.

Published by Genesis, who've previously issued weighty (literally!) hardback tomes on George Harrison, Faces, Dylan, Paul Weller, Jim Morrison, Jeff Lynne and many more, this lavish addition to The Beach Boys bibliography is worth every penny for those who can afford the hefty £50 price tag. Cleverly, it's a project with definitive boundaries: the late '50s being the starting point, 1980 – the year they played to over half a million people in Washington DC on American Independence Day – marking the end of this narrative. It's clever because all the key movers and shakers were alive throughout – Dennis being the first to die when he drowned in '83, of course – which means every stage of their rocky route from '60s superstars to '70s struggles is documented via contemporary archive quotes and some more recent updates.

The main selling point, however, are the incredible photos and illustrations. This is where it becomes more like looking at a family album, less a biography. Turn any page and you'll find a gem – whether that's Brian's sketchy early lyrics, or a postcard of Hawthorne, their hometown, when "it was all fields"!

Chris Twomey

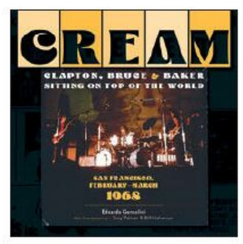
LISTEN TO THE
SHINDIG!
BROADCAST
ON MIXCLOUD

CREAM: CLAPTON, BRUCE & BAKER SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD, SAN FRANCISCO, FEBRUARY-MARCH 1968

Edoardo Genzolini

★★★★

SCHIFFER PUBLISHING



You could say Cream found themselves sitting on top of the world in March 1968. The trio had arrived in San Francisco on their second US tour to play a four-night run of shows at the Fillmore and Winterland that would ultimately yield the historic live recordings which later appeared on the ground-breaking part studio-part live double album *Wheels Of Fire*.

Very much a companion volume to his previous study *Teenage Wasteland: The Who At Winterland* 1968 & 1976, Edoardo Genzolini approaches Cream's four nights in SF as the moment the band attained legendary status on American soil, given the sense of anticipation surrounding the shows and the degree to which Messrs Clapton, Bruce and Baker elevated their performance levels way beyond anything they'd previously attained.

Besides including interview material with documentary filmmaker Tony Palmer (*All My Loving*, *Cream Farewell Concert*) and live recording engineer Bill Halverson, the eyewitness accounts of crew members and concert attendees, reconstructions of set lists for each of the four nights and information on all known official and unofficial live recordings what really brings this unprecedentedly detailed account to life is the inclusion of a bonanza of previously unpublished live shots taken by fans and professionals alike.

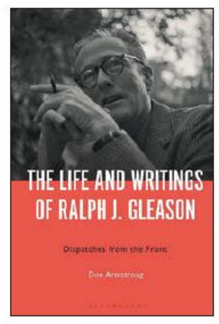
Grahame Bent

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT: THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF RALPH J GLEASON

Don Armstrong

★★★★

BLOOMSBURY



Anyone who writes even three words, now and forever, about music and the people who make music, owes a massive dept to Ralph Gleason (1917-1975), the undisputed dean of jazz criticism *and* the only-slightly-disputed dean of '60s rock criticism. No mean feat and a seamless transition as well.

Most of us know him mainly as one of the founders of *Rolling Stone*, back when that meant something, but he had been a highly-respected jazz critic since the '30s. When Lenny Bruce appeared and was being savaged by polite society, Gleason was the dissenting voice who "got it". This wasn't stand-up comedy, he said, this was jazz. When the city of San Francisco burst open in multicolour explosion a decade later, Gleason was there again, and again he "got it". This, too, fit his very wide definition of jazz. He

The Beach Boys somewhere in Britain, early '70s

wrote critically, but like a fan. You trusted him. He was the Walter Cronkite of music criticism. He didn't just tell you if something was good or not. He revealed, without knowing you, the reasons why *you* would like it or not.

This weighty tome, which first appeared online in 2013, does a wonderful job describing his life and work, and weaving them together effortlessly, without ever getting too academic about it. Recommended.

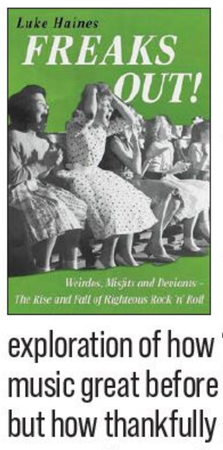
Mike Fornatale

FREAKS OUT! WEIRDOS, MISFITS AND DEVIANTS: THE RISE AND FALL OF RIGHTEOUS ROCK 'N' ROLL

Luke Haines

★★★★

NINE EIGHT



Part manifesto, part memoir, and part music history, the new book from Auteurs and Black Box Recorder mainman (and determinedly wayward solo artist) Haines is presented as an exploration of how "the freaks" made pop music great before being purged in the '90s, but how thankfully a new generation (led, you may be surprised to hear, by Billie Eilish) is currently bringing freakery back to the heart of youth culture.

The first few chapters stick reasonably close to this outline, mixing early-life autobiography (Haines as a "provincial punk" in Walton-on-Thames and Portsmouth) with ruminations on Gene Vincent, Johnny Ray and Hank Marvin as true freak originators. Three prime exemplars of '70s freakdom are celebrated in the chapters on Steve Peregrine Took, Mick Farren and Robert Calvert ("Mad Bob from Margate") that will have you chuckling and nodding vigorously in equal measure. But the connections become increasingly tenuous till we're left with a disparate collection of essays on everything from morris dancing and wrestling to heartfelt tributes to Haines' friend Cathal Coughlan and The Go-Betweens (great, but not freaky).

This isn't a problem: Haines' writing is always acerbically entertaining, sometimes savagely ironic or tongue-in-cheek, but ultimately sincere and, yes, righteous. And maybe this freewheeling approach is more genuinely freaky anyway, as sound life rules – never get the band back together, never wear shorts, avoid anything resembling a career – lead onto personal appreciations of deep freak heroes The Incredible String Band and Ivor Cutler. Gobble, gobble, we accept you! One of us!

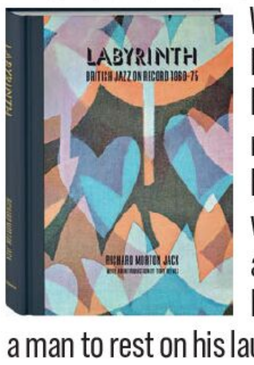
Ben Graham

LABYRINTH: BRITISH JAZZ ON RECORD 1960-75

Richard Morton Jack

★★★★★

LANSDOWNE PUBLISHING



Writer and label boss Richard Morton Jack has been busy of late, reissuing albums on his Sunbeam label, and writing a critically acclaimed biography of Nick Drake. Clearly not a man to rest on his laurels, he's back with *Labyrinth*, a massive coffee table guidebook as hefty as the table itself, covering British jazz during its fabled '60s and '70s epoch.

Readers of Morton Jack's guide to British counterculture music *Galactic Ramble* will know the care and attention that goes into his work, and *Labyrinth* is a lovingly curated overview of hundreds of British jazz albums, lavishly illustrated with sleeves and adverts, and supplemented with contemporary music reviews and Morton Jack's own analysis.

The logistics in gathering these albums together is head-swimming, and the rarity of some of these LPs means that this will be the first time that many readers without very deep pockets will be able to study the artwork and sleeve notes for some true holy grails of the British jazz scene. Omissions are few, and mostly exist by design, as noted in an opening essay – the book eschews 45s and soundtracks, and there's no Ken Colyer and Kenny Ball round these parts as trad barely gets a look in.

This is a seriously impressive work, music curation at its finest. Yes, it's expensive and you'll probably do your back in trying to pick it up, but for anyone with even a cursory interest in a genre often untouched by music scholars, it's essential.

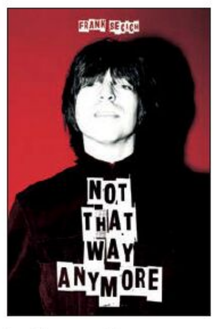
Thomas Patterson

NOT THAT WAY ANYMORE

Frank Secich

★★★

HIGH VOLTAGE PUBLISHING



For those unfamiliar, storied Dead Boys/Stiv Bators/Blue Ash/Deadbeat Poets man Frank Secich is the Rickenbacker-slinging real deal. You might not know Frank's world, but he's good company, a true believer in rock 'n' roll who rages himself into a sort of blackout at high school during a visit from a preachy Christian rock outfit.

Not That Way Anymore is a companion volume to his 2015 memoir *Circumstantial Evidence*. It's perhaps more of an appendix than a second volume, a series of non-chronological vignettes and anecdotes ranging from the late '60s to the present day. There's a cast of thousands from famed weird kids TV host Uncle Floyd (yes him, of Bowie fame) to chatty Liverpool cabbies. Amongst them, Bators and co loom large in these pages, as does legendary Bomp! head honcho Greg Shaw and the inevitable Zelig figure that is Kim Fowley.

There's a neat fanzine-style approach to *NTWA*. It's a slim volume, but well-designed and filled out with photos, original lyrics and manuscript pages. Most affectingly, there's a lot of memories of family, old bandmates, friends and even pets that are no longer with us. The pinball approach to the timeline and the constant chopping and changing of typeface takes a chapter or two to adjust to, but Secich is a great narrator – a road warrior and songwriter expertly steering you through a world of punk performance art, garage band graft, stolen guitars, Dada-ish road hi-jinks and attempts to mount a Blue Ash performance of *Tommy*.

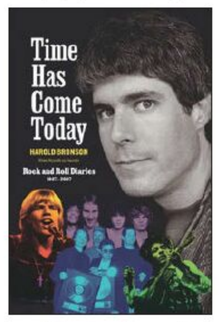
Martin Ruddock

TIME HAS COME TODAY: ROCK AND ROLL DIARIES 1967-2007

Harold Bronson

★★★★

TROUSER PRESS



Harold Bronson's four decades of diary entries covering his journey from student music journalist at UCLA's *Daily Bruin* via freelancing for *Rolling Stone* to manning the hot seat at Rhino read like an insider's view of the workings of the merry go round that was the LA-based music biz during the late '60s and the early to mid-70s. Opting to focus his energies on managing the Rhino Records store on LA's Westwood Boulevard and subsequently launching the Rhino label in 1978 the diaries become a chronicle of Bronson's transformation of Rhino from a maverick outsider operation releasing novelty records to a widely respected reissue label.

Eminently readable throughout the diaries come peppered with appearances from an all-star cast including Peter Noone, Flo & Eddie, Arthur Lee, Michael Nesmith, Mike Chapman, Ray Manzarek, The Monkees, Kim Fowley, Neil Innes, Andrew Loog Oldham and many more.

By the time the previously independent Rhino label has been absorbed by the all-conquering corporate giant Warner Music Group in 2003, Bronson's disillusionment with the current state of the music business is painfully clear. Concluding his postscript with the words "my aspiration has been to turn people on to great music", even the most cursory of glances at the riches to be found in the Rhino catalogue will tell you that Harold Bronson did exactly that with plenty to spare.

Grahame Bent

Ummagumma for the people. Index For Working Musik (this pic); Mystic Shed, General Waste, Winter Gardens (right)
PHOTOS: JEFF PITCHER

UMMAGUMMA
The Piper, St Leonards on Sea
SATURDAY 27TH JANUARY

Ummagumma at The Piper. There's no mistaking whose technicolor spirits are being invoked tonight. Back after a five-year hiatus, this all-dayer celebrates the best of the thriving Sussex psych and shoegaze bands as well as guests from further afield. Hastings' star is in the ascendent; Hotwax and Aircooled may have fledged and flown, but there are more nestlings ready to soar.

It's early, but things are already getting jagged. Local masked noiseniks Thee Headshrinkers continue their transformation from unassuming garage-punkers into a more thistly prospect. Their Fall-like vocals now pierce swollen, fuzzy bass lines and there's a reinvigorated groove and swing to their step.

Still only in their very early 20s, fellow Hastings freaks The Mystic Shed have been honing their intricately knitted, capricious skinny-prog for eight years. A good foot taller than when they first stepped on a stage, but still wide-eyed and exuberant, they bring a grin to the face of even the most acid-hardened of heads here. "This piece is about Dr Beeching, you know, from the '60s," they laugh, then launch into something more insane than any song about the consolidation of the branch rail services has any right to be.

Much newer arrivals Lazarus Lake are still only months old. They're tauter, a heady, groovy bass, scratchy guitar and hypnotic drums trio, with bassist Jamie occasionally hopping on to freak out on keyboards. It's a solid, slow build set, that's compelling, complex and brooding. General Waste are the closest the area has to a supergroup, with ex-Gorilla drummer Billy Darlington, Tobio, late of Les Grys Grys, street legend Lewis Floyd Henry on bass duties and Message From The Ravens' Philly Piggott on vocals. Tonight, they weave improvisation with heavy grooves, borrowing liberally from Syd Barrett and company. 'Interwheely Overbin' is Floyd through a backwards telescope, while 'There Are Ghosts Everywhere' has Philly at full Grace Slick-tilt and is a proper trip. Formed only a month previously on a whim, fingers are crossed that they coalesce into a full-time proposition.

Tonight's headliners are Index For Working Musik, formed by members of The Proper Ornaments and Toy and Nathalia Bruno (DRIFT). Their VU-meets-Slowdive murmuring is augmented by cello and trombone. However, this isn't an aimless wander; there's a backbone beneath the wooze, a tension to their languor, a ratcheting-up of sinister intent. Highlights are the shimmering 'Wagner' and the nearly-pop of '1871'. Fans of John Cale's solo work will find much to dig into here. Finally come Winter Gardens, fronted by Ananda Howard, all icy '90s textures, layered over metronomic beats. Yummy gummy.

Kate Hodges

JONATHAN RADO
Zebulon, Los Angeles
TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER

It's a boisterous night at Zebulon. Jonathan Rado is set to take the stage, following the release of his fantastic album *For Who The Bell Tolls For*. The one-half of Foxygen has spent recent years producing the likes of Weyes Blood and Father John Misty, but his fans have missed his music. The too-small crowd buzzes around anxiously. We've been told that "special guests" will be making an appearance. There are Lemon Twigs in the audience (that's a good sign) and we suspect that Foxygen's second half might show up, too.

Rado takes the stage with one heck of a supporting cast. The Lemon Twigs join as second and third drummers for the first ditty, which is slightly blurred and confused. By song number two ('Don't Wait Too Long'), however, things seem to be euphoniously out of control. Rado has written a fantastic slew of songs, and at times he keeps up with their demands. Other times, though, he's slightly overtaken by the many other heavy hitters on stage. They close out the first set with the accompaniment of a saxophonist for 'Walk Away,' and it's stunning. Keep the sax, Rado.

Midway through, they announce what we've all been waiting for: "Ladies and gentleman, Foxygen!" "Yeah!!!" we scream. Rado and The Lemon Twigs are now accompanied by the Mad Hatter-esque Sam France. He saunters to the front of the stage, and leaps into 'In The Darkness'. For 'Upon A Hill' France channels his best Scott Walker, but his voice falls flat. The highlight is unquestionably 'How Can You Really', which features Rado's fantastic piano playing and expert backup vocals from the D'Addarios.

Tess Carges

GRUFF RHYS
Kings Place, London
WEDNESDAY 7TH FEBRUARY

Gruff Rhys occupies a rarified space in British music. With the possible exception of Damon Albarn, who else can you think of that plays the bulk of their set from their 25th album overall – the sublime *Sadness Sets Me Free* – and at no point do you think, I wish he'd play the old stuff? Moreover, his ability to mix agit-pop with empathy and benevolence means that he never hectors, a skill that's been in evidence since Super Furry Animals' idiosyncratic howl of protest, 'The Man Don't Give A Fuck'.

Indeed, 'Cover Up The Cover Up' is a melancholy joy that's at once a call to arms and a soothing aural balm as 'They Sold My Home To Build A Skyscraper' takes on added pertinence in this area of London undergoing radical regeneration. Adding to the musical wonder is barefooted drummer Kliph Skurlock, whose beats emphasise and punctuate the material, not least on the joyous glam stomp of 'Loan Your Loneliness', and so cements his position as an integral part of Rhys' musical vision. Aided and abetted by Osian Gwynedd (piano), Huw V Williams (double bass) and Gruff ab Arwel (keys), 'I Tendered My Resignation' and 'Negative Vibes' see Rhys balance ennui with dark humour.

Still resisting phoney encores, Rhys conjures a magical show that points a righteous finger at the architects of our current shitshow through the prism of psychedelia with a generous serving of compassion for those at the receiving end of this grief. You can't help but love him.

Julian Marszalek

"'This piece is about Dr Beeching, you know, from the '60s,' they laugh, then launch into something more insane than any song about the consolidation of the branch rail services has any right to be"

NOMAD EEL RECORDS
Music Festival

The Grand Annex
Saturday, April 13th, 2024

Tickets 30.00 / 37.00

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Dream Phases
Livingmore
Young Creatures
SuperGloom

Imaad Wasif
The Blank Tapes
Greg Garvey
RJ Bloke

Doors Open at 3:30 pm - Show starts at 4:00pm

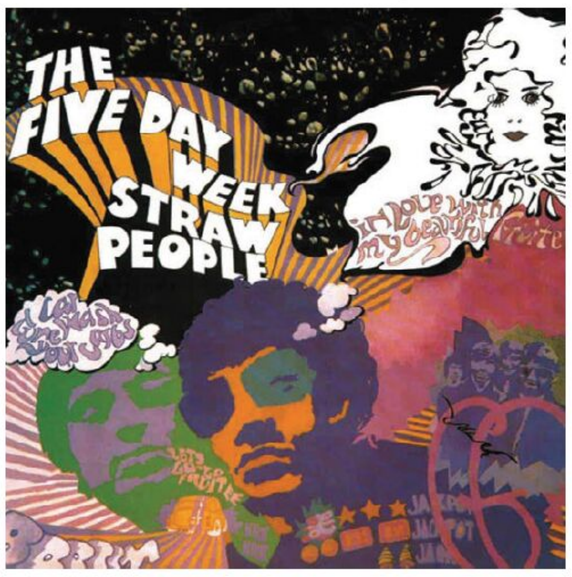
434 W. 6th Street San Pedro California 90731
Produced by Grand Vision Foundation
grandvision.org/event/nomad-eel-fest
(310) 833-4813

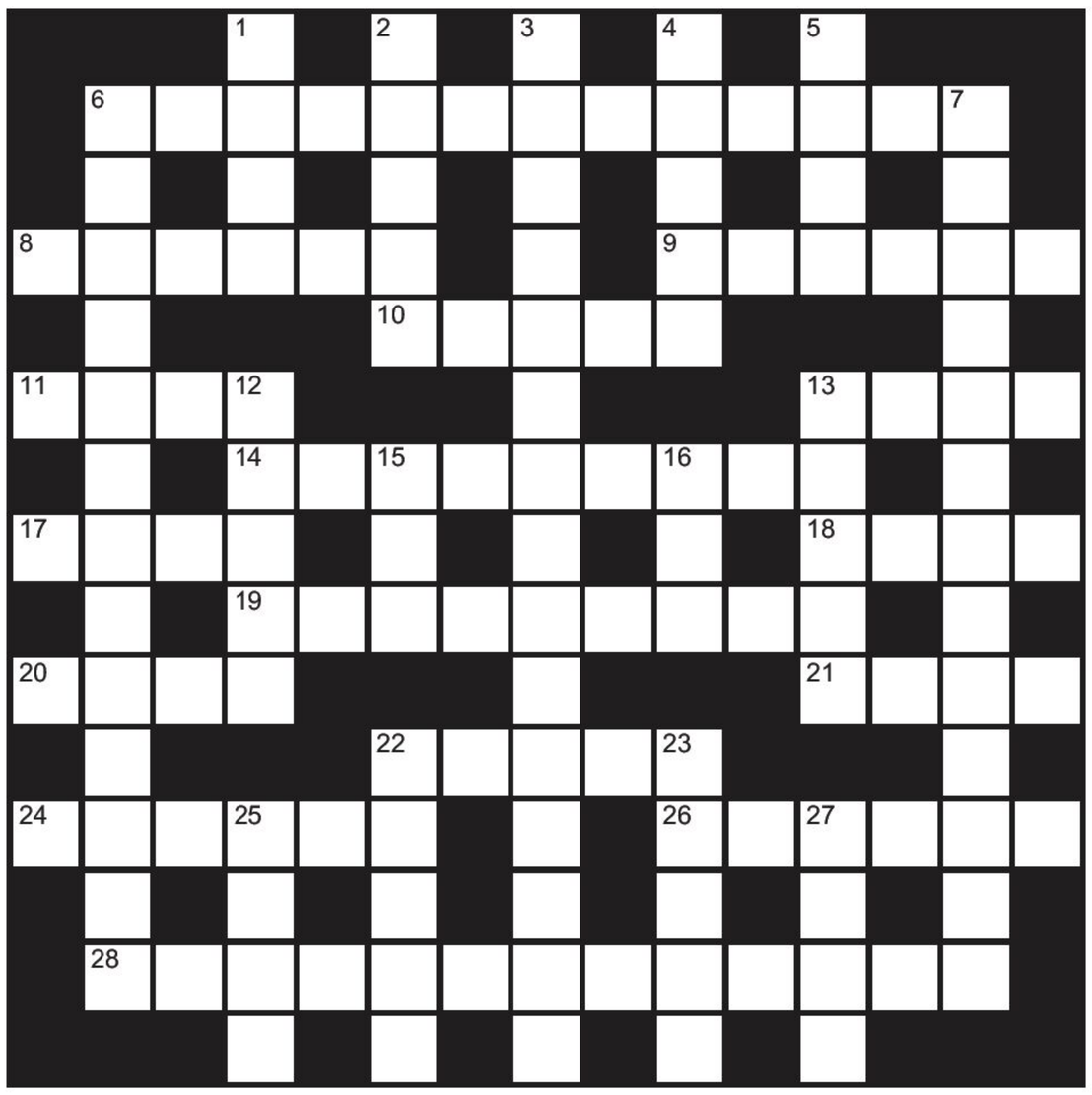
Background Painting Artwork by Brian Sloan Hakes

Prize Crossword

by Stuart Draper

FIVE DAY WEEK STRAW PEOPLE's sole self-titled 1968 album remains a curious entry in the post-Swinging London pop-psych canon. Cut in one afternoon with members of Andromeda and released on the budget Saga label, the new Morgan Blue Town coloured vinyl reissue will save you a few hundred quid. Alternatively, we have a copy to give away. To enter, simply send your completed crossword to *Shindig!* #149 Crossword, 40 Windsor Crescent, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EA or email a legible scan of it to win@shindig-magazine.com with the words "S! #149 crossword competition" in the subject line, no later than 4th April. And don't forget to include your name and address!





Across

6 Badfinger ponder what Twink's greatest group was (5,8)
8 Twisted tester tags Verve Forecast artist in the end for Big Star (6)
9 Sister to The Edgar Broughton Band, an initial spirit perhaps (6)
10 I don't need heroin to follow Mike or those Maidenhead folk (5)
11 As a songwriting team, Chris Arnold, David Martin and Geoff Morrow provided mammoth content (4)
13 Slightly undesired label home of Flamin' Groovies and The Searchers in the late seventies (4)
14 Cover star fun at the outskirts of Kentucky – right out of the suitcase (5-4)
17 ISB founder gives weight to bulk of anagram (4)
18 Hussars has gone to The Beatles' initial destination (4)
19 Royal flop fashions Happy End predecessor (5,4)
20 Mad Hank trails King (4)
21 The Hollies finally added to the sound of The Jayhawks (4)
22 Questionable beginning from The Poppy Family casts spells (spelled poorly) (5)
24 More sorcery from Coven – yes, the real name of Jinx is already here (6)
26 Weird? Me? Thank you! Bowie gave space before (6)
28 Out of a film journal, The Free Spirits badly undo sad things (5,3,5)

Down

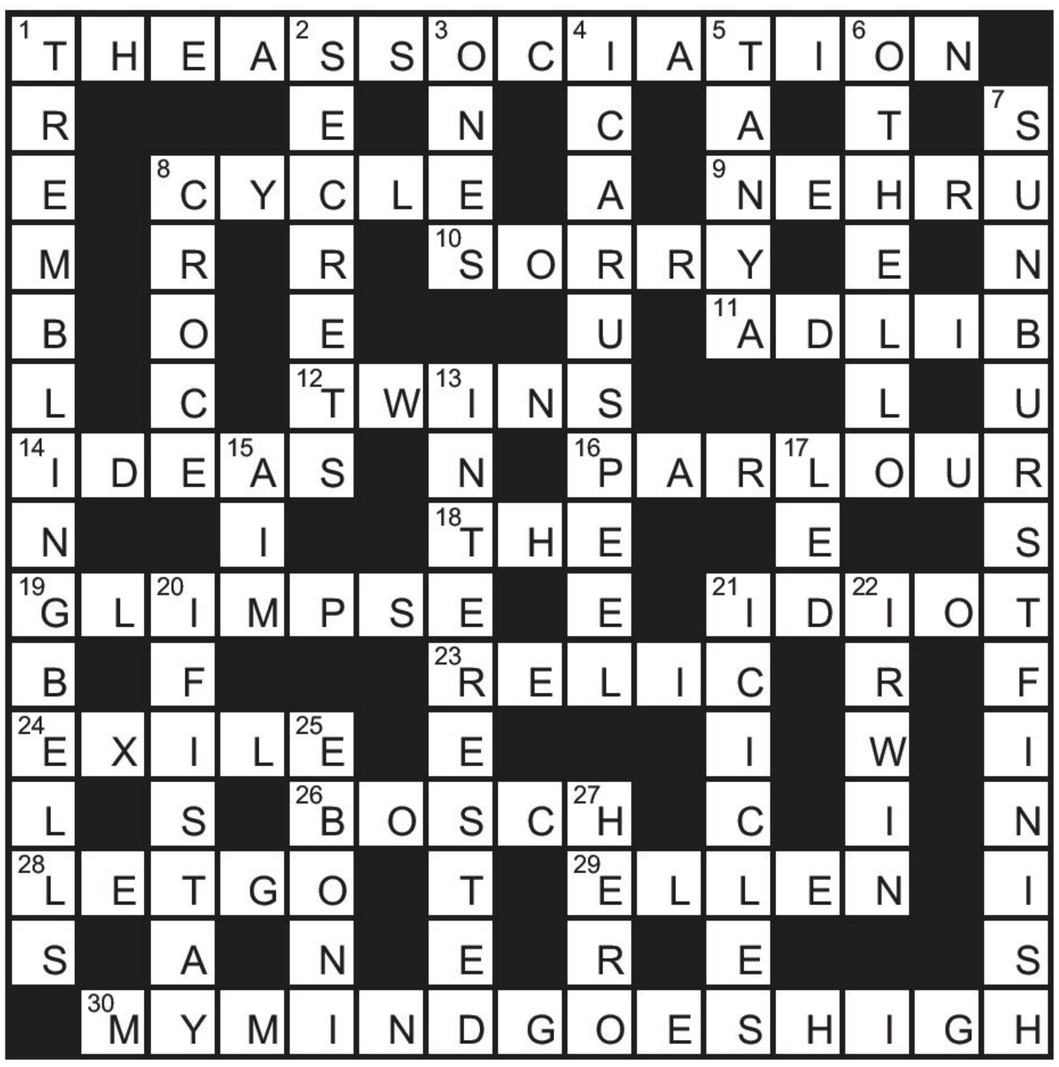
1 Stephen really means Warren, in part and in partnership (4)
2 The Pretty Things oddly hated this ahead of a socialite (5)
3 Wow from our cover star brings ruined relic to ceremony (10,5)
4 Marc requires a symbol and editing to be fulfilled (5)
5 Michael Weaver's amphibious alter ego ends on half rogues section (4)
6 Odd impostor shame brings forth Iron Butterfly (13)
7 Kinks compilation let lewd creeps loosely lead (4,9)
12 Fraternity is finished as leader hides in Arabic country (2,3)
13 Boneheaded savvy knowledge uses letters largely acronymically of the cosmic end to Nottingham church (5)
15 Sonic Jesus's link between virtue and anger is somewhat ignored (3)
16 Mundo has unoriginal start with Buffalo Springfield (3)
22 We rot internally before a song from Wishful Thinking (5)
23 Cory Hanson's pale rider sits astride a strange shore (5)
25 Embrace circle for Oscar's ode to novelist (4)
27 Nesmith gives different conclusion to conundrum (4)

Name

Address

Phone **Email**

Issue 148 crossword solution



NEW MODEL ARMY

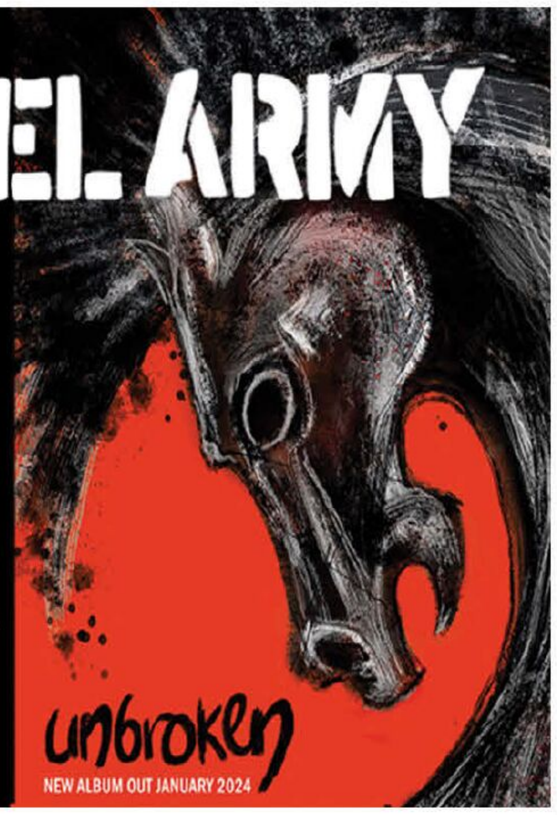
APRIL 2024

21 NEWCASTLE BOILER SHOP

23 CAMBRIDGE THE JUNCTION

26 WOLVERHAMPTON WULFRUN AT THE HALLS

27 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY



TGC CONCERTS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH NEIL O'BRIEN ENTERTAINMENT

PRESENTS

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HARPENDEN ERIC MORECAMBE CENTRE 5TH APRIL
SOUTHAMPTON TURNER SIMS 6TH APRIL
EASTBOURNE ROYAL HIPPODROME 11TH APRIL
BURY ST EDMUNDS THE APEX 12TH APRIL
SUNDERLAND FIRE STATION 13TH APRIL
18TH APRIL LYTHAM LOWTHER PAVILION
19TH APRIL CORBY CORE AT THE CUBE
20TH APRIL STOCKTON ARC
25TH APRIL NORWICH EPIC
26TH APRIL NORTHWICH MEMORIAL HALL
27TH APRIL COVENTRY HMV EMPIRE

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PHOTO CREDIT LAWRENCE WATSON

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SARI SCHORR

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THU 18 APR GLASGOW / ORAN MOR
FRI 19 APR NEWCASTLE / ANARCHY BREW CO
SAT 20 APR BARNSLEY / BIRDWELL
SUN 21 APR LEEK / FOXLOWE ARTS
WED 24 APR GRIMSBY / DOCKS ACADEMY
THU 25 APR BIRMINGHAM / CASTLE & FALCON
FRI 26 APR GLOUCESTER / GUILDHALL
SAT 27 APR LONDON / GARAGE
SUN 28 APR NEWBURY / ARLINGTON ARTS

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FRI 26 APR **CLITHEROE** - THE GRAND
SUN 27 APR **LIVERPOOL** - HANGAR 34
SUN 28 APR **LINCOLN** - THE DRILL
TUE 30 APR **FARSLEY** - THE OLD WOOLLEN
THU 02 MAY **STOCKTON** - ARC
FRI 03 MAY **CARLISLE** - OLD FIRE STATION
SAT 04 MAY **GALASHIELS** - MAC ARTS
SUN 05 MAY **BURY** - THE MET
THU 09 MAY **SOUTHEND** - CHINNERYS
FRI 10 MAY **CAMBRIDGE** - JUNCTION
SUN 12 MAY **SHOREHAM** - ROPETACKLE
TUE 14 MAY **SHREWSBURY** - THEATRE SEVERN
WED 15 MAY **NEWBURY** - ARLINGTON ARTS
FRI 17 MAY **SOUTHAMPTON** - 1865
SAT 18 MAY **EXETER** - PHOENIX
SUN 19 MAY **BATH** - KOMEDIA
TUE 21 MAY **BUXTON** - OPERA HOUSE
WED 22 MAY **SOUTHPORT** - ATKINSON
WED 29 MAY **GRIMSBY** - DOCKS ACADEMY
THU 30 MAY **HARROGATE** - THEATRE
SAT 01 JUN **HOLMFIRTH** - PICTUREDROME

Tickets: www.thegigcartel.com
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Barry Ryan

Barry Ryan Sings Paul Ryan

MGM, UK, 1969

SLEEVE DESIGN BY CHADWICK HALL AND CHRISTA PETERS

On record, the twin with the voice brilliantly interprets the twin with the songs. **CHRIS GROOM** investigates the photographic duo on the other side of the lens

As a pop duo, the brothers Paul and Barry Ryan occasionally troubled the Top 20 with a string of melodic mid-60s singles. But then, hailing as they did from a showbiz background – mother Marion a popular big-band singer, their stepfather the agent and impresario Harold Davison, whose client Frank Sinatra literally became their godfather – what else were the boys going to do? Real success finally came when Paul stepped away from the microphone to concentrate on writing his melodramatic epics and Barry took the five and a half-minute classic 'Eloise' high into the charts in 1968.

The subsequent album, featuring Barry performing songs composed by Paul, received rave reviews and continued with the grandiose "'MacArthur Park' meets Wagner" orchestral pop of 'Eloise' on epic tracks like 'The Colour of My Love' and 'Love Is On The Way'. The gatefold cover design also veered away from the norm, setting cool black & white stills and angular captions in a graphic layout that echoed a European-style advertising feature.

It's perhaps unsurprising then, to find that MGM had commissioned the husband-and-wife team of Chadwick Hall and Christa Peters to handle the cover art for this collection, both skilled photographers who between them had contributed to many of the major fashion magazines throughout Europe and the USA.

Born in New York in '26, the stylish Chadwick Hall spent much of the '60s working for *Esquire* and *GQ*, putting everyone from Cary Grant to Salvador Dali on the latter's cover. A former theatre critic, Hall turned to celebrity portrait photography and moved to Europe with his wife, the German photo-journalist Christa Peters, opening a studio in London in '66. Peters had trained as a photographer in Stuttgart and Berlin where, still a student, she co-founded the pioneering magazine *Twen*, the only woman on their editorial team. She worked alongside the likes of Helmut Newton and FC Gundlach, regularly commuting between studios in Cologne and New York to produce work for publications such as *Spiegel*, *Stern*, *Nova* and *Vogue*.

"Barry formed a close friendship with Christa and her expressive, documentary images became a strong influence on the singer's own photographic work"

While working on the MGM album, Barry formed a close friendship with Christa and her expressive, documentary images became a strong influence on the singer's own photographic work. Although his baroque-pop singing style found favour in Germany and France, by the early '70s the hits had dried up, and towards the end of the decade Ryan turned to photography to help save his career. During an interview with The Strange Brew podcast in 2017, Ryan said, "I just thought I was really stale. I was drinking a lot. I was slightly off the rails and thought, I've had enough of this. I discovered photography and, being an addictive kind of person, I just put everything into my photography and let the music drift by." Ryan found work with David Bailey's *Ritz* magazine and subsequently had several celebrity images brought by The National Portrait Gallery.

Confident and strong-willed, Christa Peters could have been a name to rival the likes of Newton, Bourdin and Bailey. But just as her career in London was blossoming, she fell ill to an "unknown, but serious" disease and died in '81 at the tragically young age of 48. Shortly afterwards, her grief-stricken husband Chadwick Hall decided to burn her entire photographic archive, with one magazine later suggesting it may have been more through jealousy than sadness.

However, there is a happier postscript. When German textile giant Nino went into administration in '94, around 80,000 fashion photographs were discovered in the bankrupt company's archive – long-lost advertising campaigns from many a famous photographer, which thankfully included a large number of images by the late Christa Peters. S!

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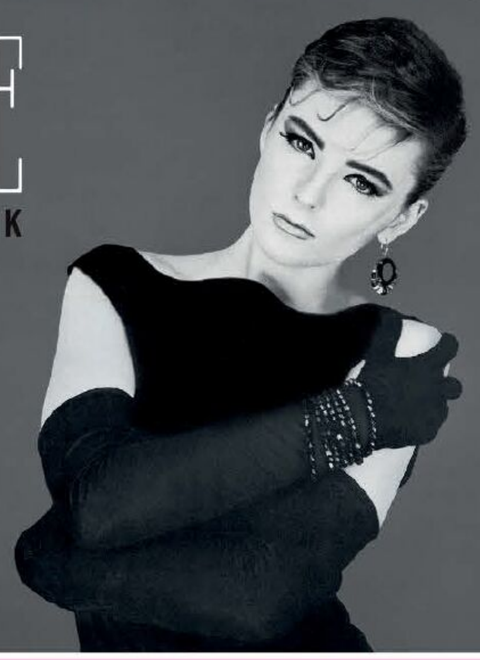
ALTERED IMAGES

BITE BACK

PERFORMING THE ALBUM
IN ITS ENTIRETY
PLUS A GREATEST HITS SET



2024
SAT 19 OCT
BRIGHTON CONCORDE 2
SUN 20 OCT
BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
TUE 22 OCT
GLASGOW ST LUKE'S
WED 23 OCT
LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY2
FRI 25 OCT
EXETER PHOENIX
SAT 26 OCT
STROUD SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS
MON 28 OCT
CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION
TUE 29 OCT
BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
WED 30 OCT
LEEDS BRUDENELL SOCIAL CLUB
FRI 01 NOV
HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME

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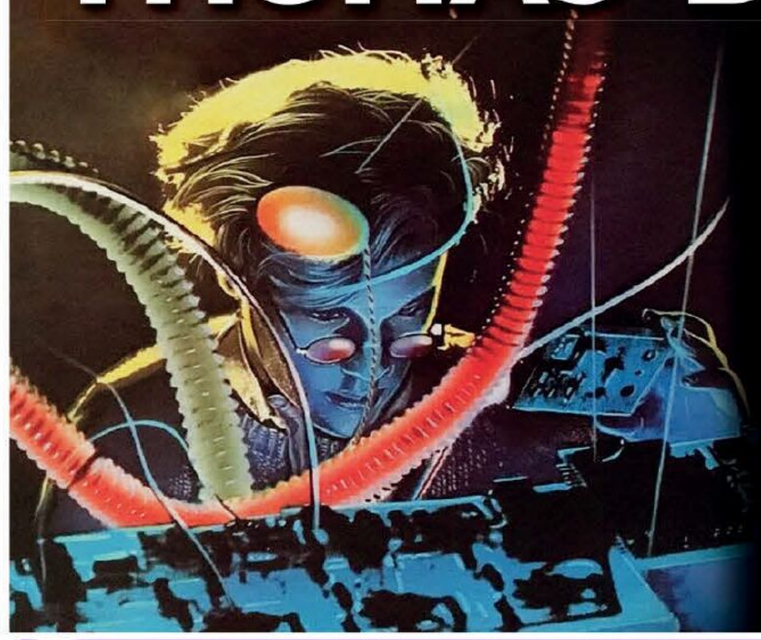

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MARTIN McALOON
(PERFORMING THE SONGS OF PREFAB SPROUT)

2024
SAT 17th AUGUST
MANCHESTER
O2 RITZ
THU 22nd AUGUST
LONDON
O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE

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THEN JERICO

2024
FRI 29 NOV
LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON
SAT 30 NOV
BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
FRI 06 DEC
LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY2
SAT 07 DEC
OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2

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AND FOUR SAIL

SATURDAY
13th JULY
LIVERPOOL
O2 ACADEMY2

SATURDAY
20th JULY
LONDON
O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
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with
STRINGS & HORNS

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PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

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02 LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY2
03 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2
04 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
05 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
06 BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
07 LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON

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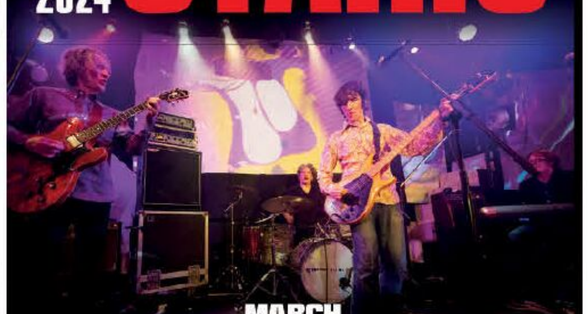

MARCH
THU 21 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 3
FRI 22 LONDON O2 ACADEMY2 ISLINGTON
SAT 23 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY3
MON 25 LEEDS OLD WOOLLEN
TUE 26 PRESTON FERRET
FRI 29 NEWCASTLE CLUNY
SAT 30 LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY2

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theweddingpresent.co.uk

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BILLY BLAGG

2024
Sat 06 Apr LEEDS O2 ACADEMY
Sat 25 May BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
Sat 19 Oct LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY
Fri 25 Oct SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY
Sat 26 Oct LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
Fri 08 Nov BRISTOL O2 ACADEMY
Sat 30 Nov MANCHESTER O2 RITZ
Fri 20 Dec OXFORD O2 ACADEMY2
Sat 21 Dec BOURNEMOUTH O2 ACADEMY
2025
Fri 24 Jan NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL

thesmyths.net

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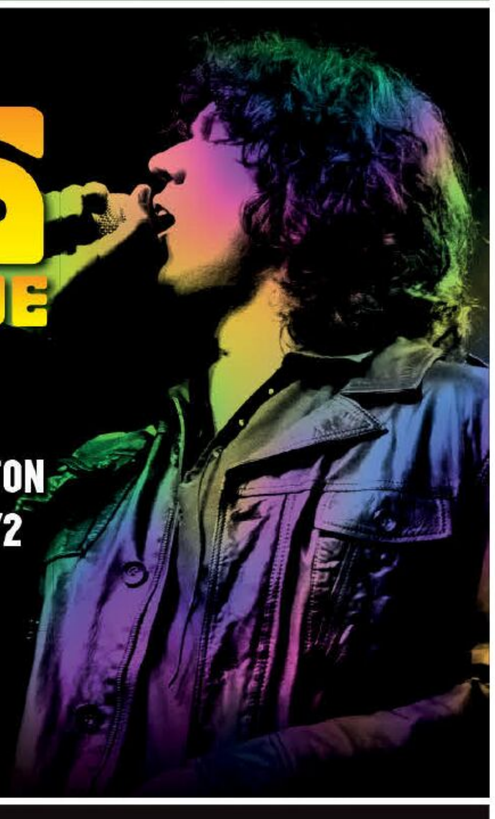
THE DOORS ALIVE



2024
FRI 27 SEP LIVERPOOL O2 ACADEMY
FRI 04 OCT LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON
SAT 05 OCT BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY2
FRI 11 OCT LEICESTER O2 ACADEMY2
FRI 18 OCT SHEFFIELD O2 ACADEMY2
2025
FRI 17 JAN NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL

TICKETMASTER.CO.UK

vinyl clicks

In which **MICHAEL BJÖRN** investigates worthy albums that have somehow eluded reissue, compilation or acclaim

DANNY KIRWAN

Hello There Big Boy!

(DJM, UK 1979)

Of all the contractual obligation albums, Danny Kirwan's final solo outing is one of the saddest.

Although the three Fleetwood Mac albums largely fronted by Kirwan after Peter Green's departure are seen as transitional today, he did in fact move the band from its blues origins towards a more melodic sound, paving the way for the huge success of the band's latter era. He was ousted by the others due to his alcoholism and erratic behaviour. This culminated in a violent scene in which Kirwan smashed his head against the wall on the night of an August 1972 US university gig and stormed out of the room, leaving blood stains everywhere.

By '75 Fleetwood Mac manager Clifford Davis had secured Kirwan a solo contract with DJM that, although well-intentioned, ironically only further documented his decline as public interest progressively tapered off. Not even spoofing the artwork from former bandmate Bob Welch's '77 platinum album *French Kiss* for the cover of *Hello There Big Boy!* boosted sales

Although recordings commenced soon after *Midnight In San Juan* was released in '76, *Hello There Big Boy!* wouldn't make its troubled appearance until '79. "I heard he had a bit of a breakdown," recalls singer Dana Gillespie. Clifford Davis had been Dana's manager back in the '60s – they'd kept in touch and he asked her to contribute backing vocals. "Clifford called me and said it's quite extraordinary because when Danny came back, he played note for note the same as what he put down two years earlier."

With his faltering mental stability, Kirwan had only penned four new songs. In addition, he dusted off 'Only You' from his Fleetwood Mac days. The smooth 'Gettin' The Feelin'' was written by Tony Rivers, who also sang correspondingly buttery backing vocals, guitarist Kirby Gregory contributed the AM-friendly 'End Up Crying', and Dana Gillespie co-wrote 'California' with Clifford. "The track is okay, but it's strange that I remember nothing about it," says Dana. "I must have sensed it wasn't a hit song!"

In the end, Clifford, who needed to finish the record for contractual reasons, had to employ 87 musicians to turn Kirwan's basic tracks into a coherent shape. Still, Kirwan is quoted saying it was the best thing he'd done. And despite no longer being able to play lead guitar, his clear voice and masterful sense of melody is nevertheless very much on display on *Hello There Big Boy!,* making it ripe for re-evaluation. Although musical complexity has been toned down and painted over with a glossy AOR sheen that stands in stark contrast to Kirwan's poor living conditions at the time, his unique talent remains unmistakable.

"I am honoured that I was on his album," concludes Dana. "Danny was a very sweet and talented guy, and Clifford looked after him."

Danny Kirwan grows up

audio heaven

MURDO MATHEWSON surveys the latest improvements in hi-fi, audio, and gadgetry

TINY DANCER

WiiM Amp

£299.00

wiimhome.com

The WiiM Amp is a stereo amplifier and high-res music streamer in one little aluminium box. Add a pair of speakers, and you're sorted. WiiM's Home app supports Amazon Music, Spotify, Qobuz, and Tidal, accesses EQ settings, and the Amp's remote enables Alexa voice commands. Connectivity counts AirPlay 2, Bluetooth, Chromecast, HDMI ARC, optical, and stereo RCA. Clever stuff.

FOUND IN THE SUPERMARKET

Groov-e My Tag

£17.99

groov-e.co.uk

Android users stick on some shoegaze, Apple fans gather around. The "works with Apple Find My" Groov-e My Tag does the job of an Apple AirTag for nearly half the price, which means less time spent looking for your keys and more time spent listening to music.

TAKE THE POWER BACK (HOME)

KEF LSX II LT

£899.00

uk.kef.com

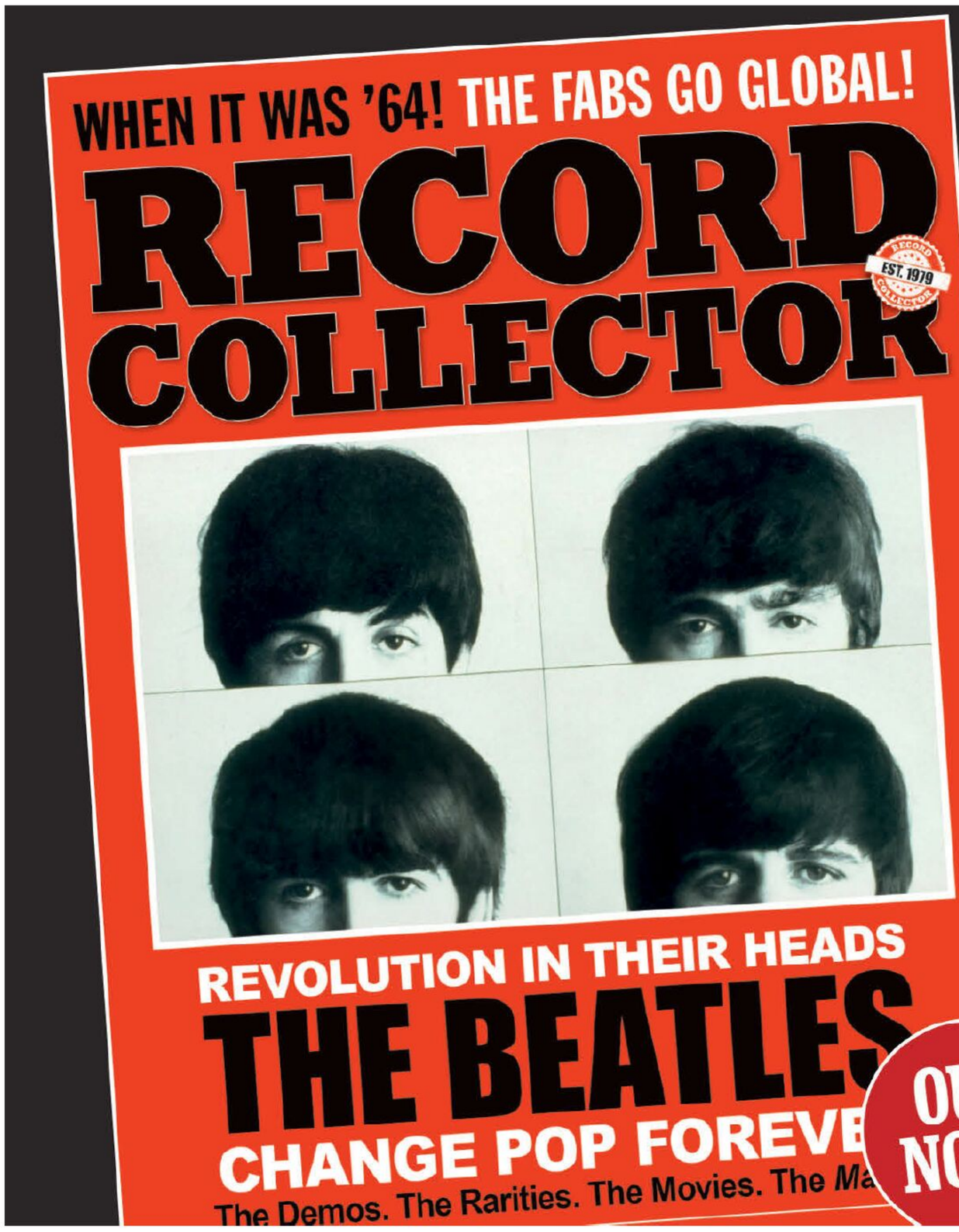
There is a lot of love for KEF's active (each speaker houses its amplification) wireless loudspeakers in Audiophile City. And the compact LSX II LT becomes the most affordable of KEF's LS Wireless collection. Okay, it's still not cheap, but add a music streaming device and – for best results – a set of speaker stands, and you have a fantastic system. Connectivity is comprehensive and includes AirPlay 2, Chromecast, HDMI ARC (think, TV) and USB-C (think, laptop).

BABY I'M-A WANT THESE

LEAK Audio Sandwich 150 & 250

£999.00 / £2,299.00

The tasty name stems from the original LEAK Sandwich speakers, launched in 1961, complete with a radical mid/bass drive unit constructed from a "sandwich" of different materials. Though the 150 and 250 update the design, they maintain lovely vintage styling, making them perfect partners for LEAK's Stereo 130 and 230 amplifiers. The 130 amp launched in 2020 and ended the maker's 40-year hiatus. LEAK is clearly on a roll.



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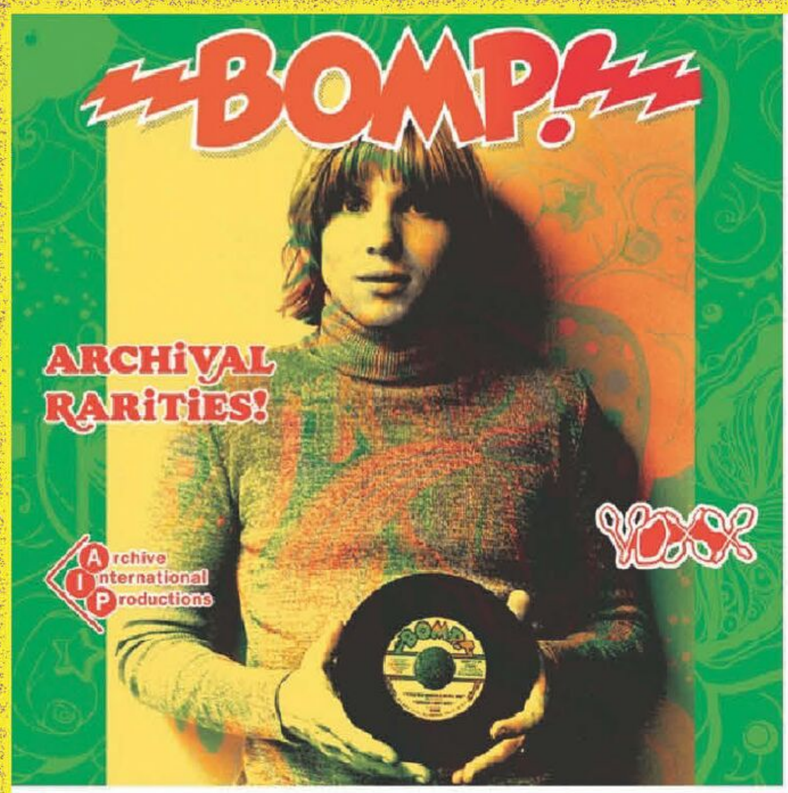

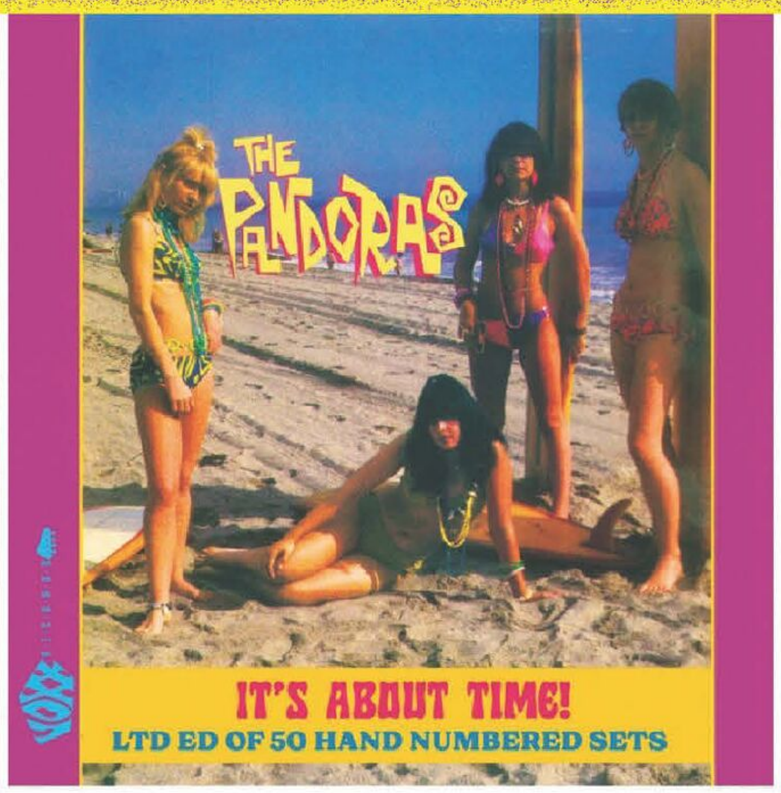

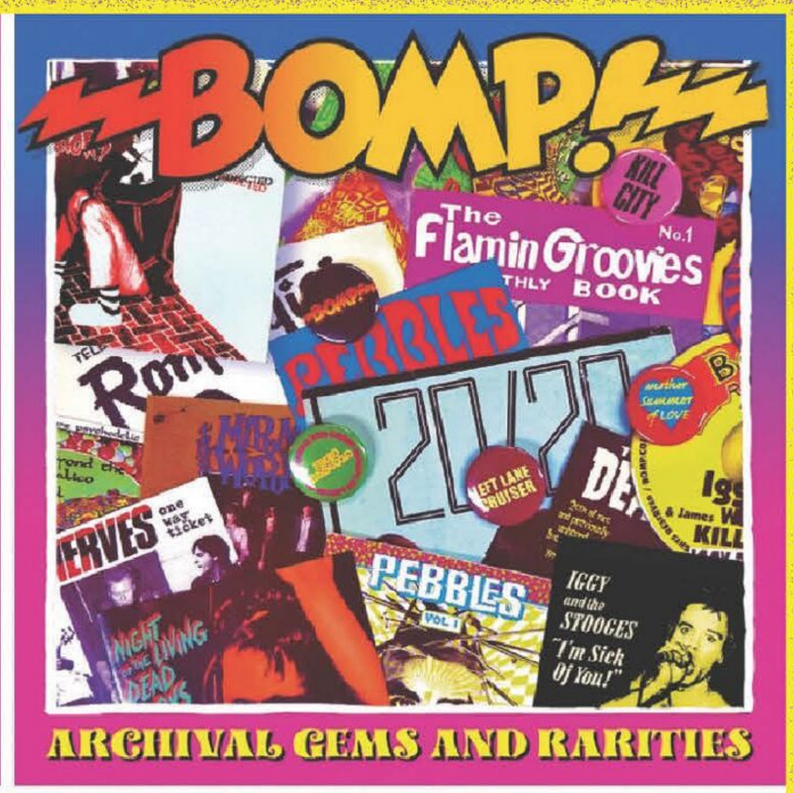

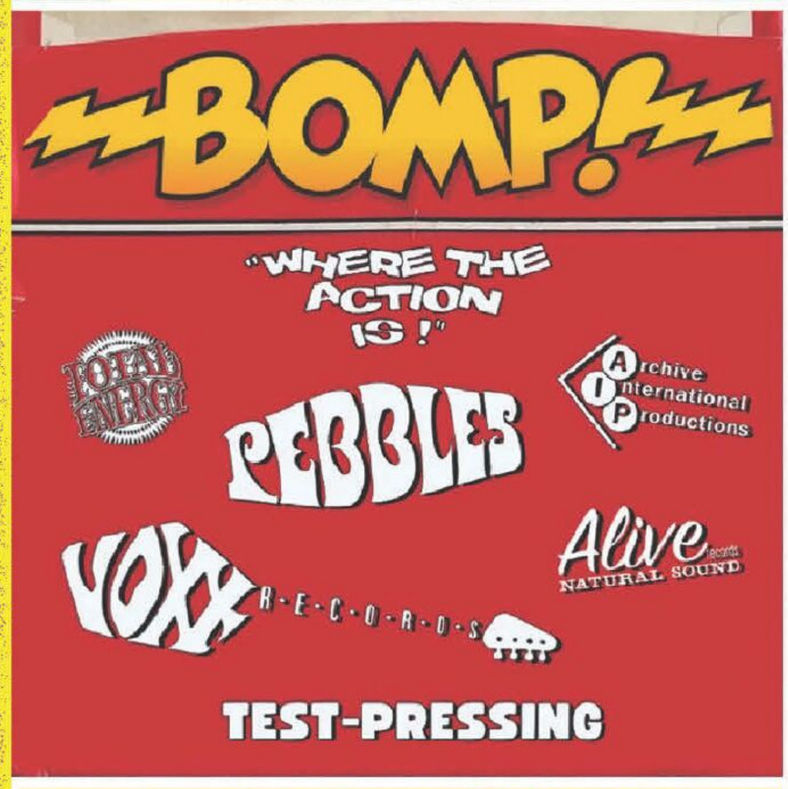

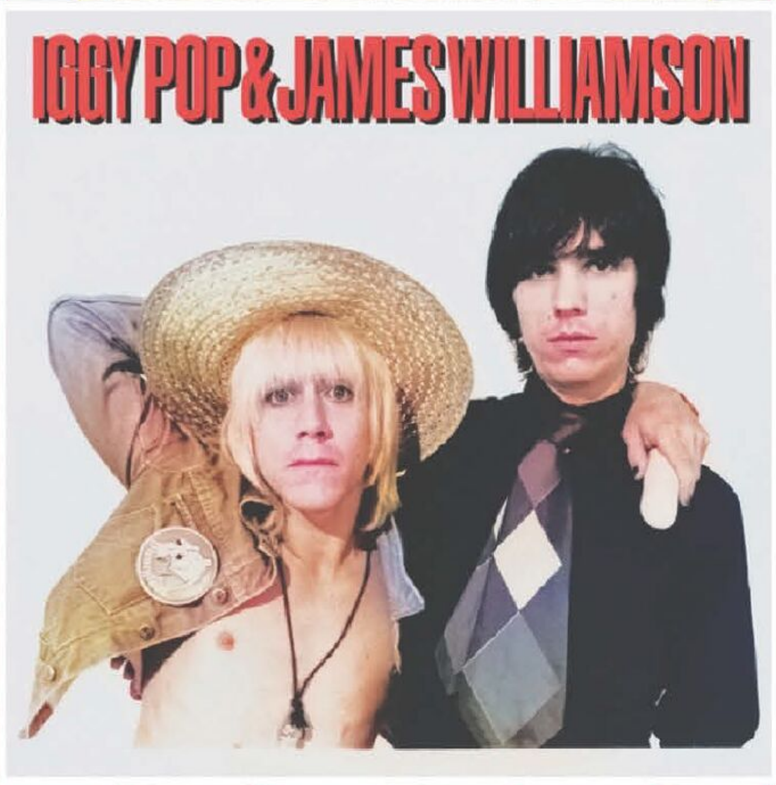

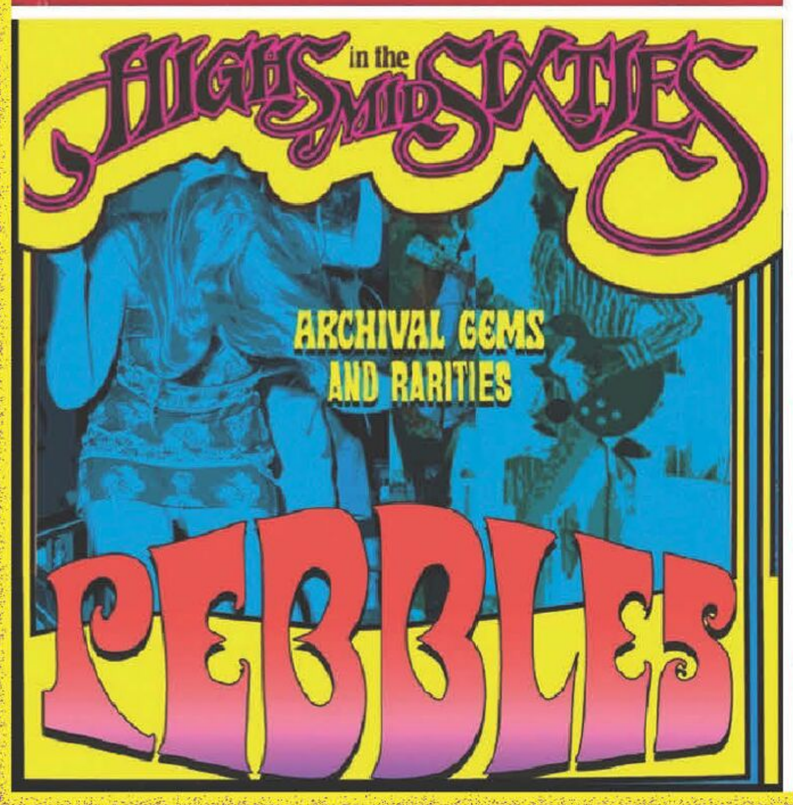

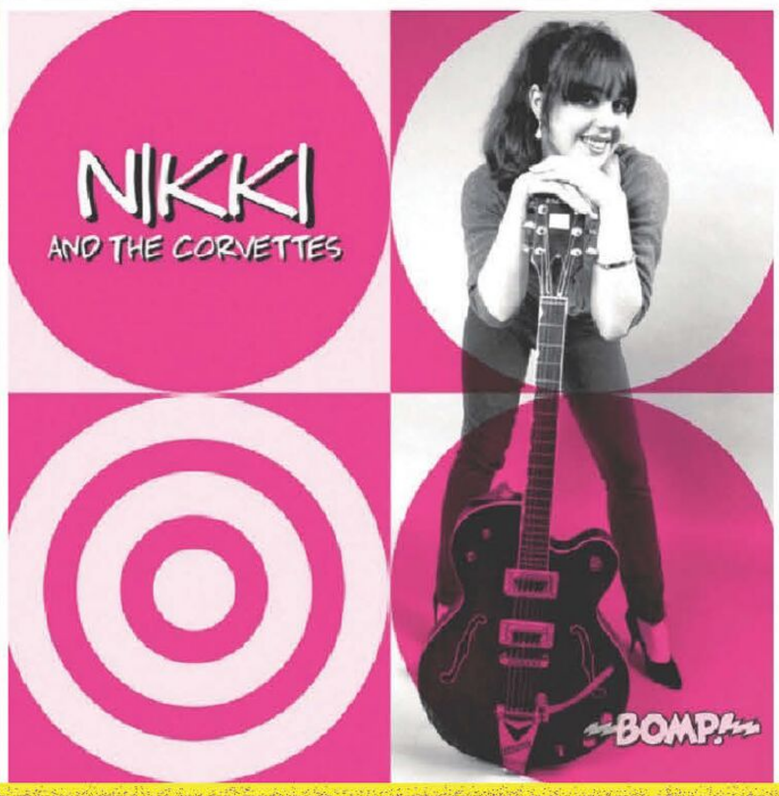

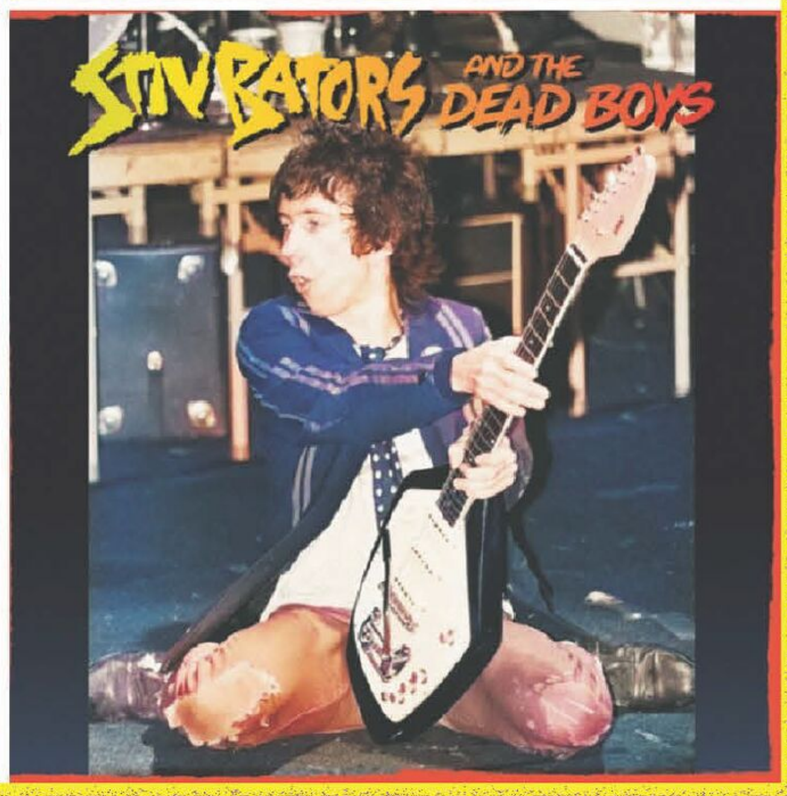

Check out these bundles and archival sets with autographs, unique covers, test pressings, and original photos and letters from the legendary Bomp files! Iggy, The Nerves, Pandoras, Pebbles, DMZ and lots more.